

December 10, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leaders Schumer and McCarthy:

The undersigned organizations write to you regarding the Lymphedema Treatment Act, H.R.1948 / S.518, which has been cosponsored by 372 House members and 69 Senators, making it the most supported healthcare bill currently before Congress.

We are pleased that this bill was included in H.R. 3 along with several other bipartisan measures. We also recognize that compromises on the significant issues addressed in H.R. 3 are not likely to occur by the end of the year.

**On behalf of the 1.5-3 million Medicare beneficiaries living with chronic lymphatic system failure (lymphedema), we urge you to publicly express your support for the Lymphedema Treatment Act, and work to include the bill in whatever compromise package emerges from the ongoing negotiations in other legislation.**

Lymphedema, like other chronic conditions, has no cure, but its effects can be mitigated through proper management. As stated by the National Cancer Institute, “The goal of lymphedema treatment centers on controlling limb swelling and minimizing complications.”<sup>1</sup>

The most vital components of treatment are medical compression garments and supplies prescribed to reduce complications and disease progression by controlling swelling. For example, in 2004, the Commonwealth of Virginia mandated private insurance and Medicaid coverage for lymphedema compression supplies. This coverage has proven to improve patient outcomes and quality of life, reduce utilization, and reduce costs. Specifically, a ten-year longitudinal study of Virginia’s lymphedema treatment mandate found over a 40% reduction in physician and therapy visits, and a greater than 50% reduction in hospitalizations.<sup>2</sup>

As policymakers strive to help beneficiaries live healthier and more productive lives, we encourage you to pass this commonsense, bipartisan legislation. The measure will address the growing number

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<sup>1</sup> National Cancer Institute. (2015). Lymphedema (PDQ®)—Health Professional Version. <http://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/lymphedema/lymphedema-hp-pdq#section/all>.

<sup>2</sup> Weiss, R. (2016). Cost of a lymphedema treatment mandate-10 years of experience in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Health Economics Review 6: 42. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13561-016-0117-3>.

of cancer-related cases, as well as those beneficiaries who acquire lymphedema from other causes or who are born with a compromised lymphatic system.

The Lymphedema Treatment Act is a bipartisan, common-sense solution that closes an unintended gap in Medicare coverage. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) acknowledged the necessity of compression therapy in the treatment and management of lymphedema in its National Coverage Determination for Pneumatic Compression Pumps.<sup>3</sup>

The federal government recognized its importance when it included coverage for compression garments for the treatment of breast cancer-related lymphedema in the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, lymphedema compression supplies are already covered by Veterans Affairs, TriCare, and Medicaid plans in 44 states plus the District of Columbia.<sup>5</sup>

It's time to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries with lymphedema have coverage for these vital, prescription medical supplies that are the cornerstone in the standard of care for the chronic condition. It is imperative that Congress pass the Lymphedema Treatment Act this year.

Sincerely,



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Lymphedema Advocacy Group  
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704-965-0620

Together with the following organizations and hospitals:

**Alliance of Dedicated Cancer Centers**  
**American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation**  
**American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network**  
**American Lymphedema Framework Project**  
**American Nurses Association**  
**American Occupational Therapy Association**  
**American Physical Therapy Association**  
**Association of American Cancer Institutes**  
**Breast Cancer Action**  
**Cancer Legal Care**

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<sup>3</sup> The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). (2019). National Coverage Analysis (NCA) for Lymphedema Pumps (CAG-00016N). <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/nca-details.aspx?NCAId=50&ver=6&NcaName=Lymphedema+Pumps&DocID=CAG-00016N&bc=gAAAAABAAAA&>.

<sup>4</sup> The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). (2019). Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act (WHCRA). [https://www.cms.gov/ccio/programs-and-initiatives/other-insurance-protections/whcra\\_factsheet.html](https://www.cms.gov/ccio/programs-and-initiatives/other-insurance-protections/whcra_factsheet.html).

<sup>5</sup> Lymphedema Advocacy Group. (2019). Federal and State Plans that Provide Coverage for Medical Compression Supplies. <https://lymphedematreatmentact.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Federal-and-Medicaid-Compression-Coverage-List.pdf>.

**Dana-Farber Cancer Institute**  
**Disability Rights Legal Center**  
**Fox Chase Cancer Center**  
**James Cancer Hospital & Solove Research Institute at The Ohio State University**  
**Lighthouse Lymphedema Network**  
**Living Beyond Breast Cancer**  
**Lymphatic Education & Research Network**  
**Moffitt Cancer Center**  
**National Lymphedema Network**  
**Oncology Nursing Society**  
**Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance**  
**Penn Medicine Cancer Rehabilitation**  
**Phelan McDermid Syndrome Foundation**  
**Seattle Cancer Care Alliance**  
**Society for Vascular Nursing**  
**Society of Gynecologic Oncology**  
**Susan G. Komen**  
**University of Vermont Cancer Center**  
**Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society**

CC:

Sen. Chuck Grassley, Chair, Committee on Finance  
Sen. Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Committee on Finance  
Rep. Frank Pallone, Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Rep. Greg Walden, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Rep. Richard Neal, Chair, Committee on Ways and Means  
Rep. Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means  
Sen. Maria Cantwell, Committee on Finance  
Sen. Todd Young, Committee on Finance  
Rep. Jan Schakowsky Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Rep. Buddy Carter, Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Rep. Earl Blumenauer, Committee on Ways and Means  
Rep. Mike Kelly, Committee on Ways and Means