



# The Lymphedema Treatment Act

## SUPPORTERS INCLUDE:

- American Cancer Society
- Oncology Nursing Society
- Komen Advocacy Alliance
- American Physical Therapy Association
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- LiveSTRONG
- Colon Cancer Alliance
- Sarcoma Foundation of America
- American Lymphedema Framework Project
- Lymphedema Advocacy Group
- Lymphatic Education and Research Network
- Lymphology Association of North America
- National Lymphedema Network

## GETTING INVOLVED:

The **Lymphedema Advocacy Group** (LAG) leads this all-volunteer, patient-driven effort, and we need your help!



**Please visit our website to learn more.**

**Act now!** Patients, friends, medical professionals and all with a vested interest must rally around patients to support passage of this important bill.

## WHY THIS LEGISLATION IS NEEDED:

Lymphedema is a chronic but treatable disease that results in an accumulation of lymph fluid (swelling) in parts of the body where lymph nodes or lymphatic vessels are damaged or inadequate. Lymphedema affects an estimated 5-6 million Americans. Among the many causes, damage from cancer treatment is the most common.

Untreated or under-treated lymphedema becomes progressive, leading to increased morbidity, thus placing a costly burden on patients and the health care system. These risks and higher costs can be effectively mitigated with proper, consistent treatment. Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT) is the standard of care for lymphedema, and is a multi-modal treatment that is only effective when used in its entirety.

**Did you know?** Medicare does not cover a critical component of CDT, the medically necessary compression supplies used daily in lymphedema treatment, citing they do not fit under any existing benefit category. As a result, many patients suffer from recurrent infections, progressive degradation in their condition and eventual disability because they cannot afford the compression supplies required to maintain their condition.

## WHAT THIS LEGISLATION WILL DO:

The Lymphedema Treatment Act will correct the deficiency in the Social Security law that prevents Medicare coverage of the compression supplies that are the mainstay of lymphedema treatment. Although this bill will only change Medicare law, it will set a standard for Medicaid and private insurance to follow.

Specific goals are:

- to enable coverage for compression, an essential component of complete lymphedema treatment, including gradient compression garments, bandages and devices;
- to support patients' adherence to their maintenance phase of treatment by covering their doctor-prescribed supplies;
- to reduce the total healthcare costs associated with lymphedema by decreasing the incidence of complications, co-morbidities and disabilities resulting from this disease.