



Lymphedema Advocacy Group

About Our State Teams

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About The Lymphedema Advocacy Group

The ***Lymphedema Advocacy Group*** (LAG), founded in 2010 by Heather Ferguson, is an all-volunteer organization made up of patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals and industry partners. Our mission is to advance lymphedema care in the United States by advocating for improved insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

For this purpose we work to increase awareness of and education about lymphedema among-lawmakers, insurance providers and other relevant entities. We support attempts to improve insurance coverage at both the state and federal levels and encourage all members of the lymphedema community to become active participants in this process. Current board member biographies can be read on the *Advocacy Team* page of our website.

What Is The Role Of Our State Teams?

The overall goal for each team is to secure all members of Congress in that state as cosponsors of the Lymphedema Treatment Act (LTA). This is a grassroots effort and our ability to effect change lies in the hands of ordinary citizens like you. Our aim is to empower state team members by providing necessary guidance, ideas and support, while also giving teams the freedom to self-direct and work toward this goal in the manner that suits their members and geographic circumstances best.

Who May Join Our State Teams?

Anyone who cares about advocating for lymphedema patients and wants to support our efforts is eligible to join. We have state team members from all walks of life, ranging from teenagers to senior citizens. Whether your life has been touched by lymphedema as a patient, family member, friend, doctor, therapist, fitter, etc., you can be an effective advocate for this cause. No experience is required and the time commitment can depend on your interests and availability.

How Are The State Teams Organized?

When you join your state's team you will give us some basic contact information. We will use that to introduce you, via group email, to your teammates. That introductory email will include an attached contact sheet (name, email, phone and address) for all current state team members. New team members should ask their fellow members about the teams' current distribution of responsibilities, and if you are interested in serving in one of the below capacities please make that known.

We suggest teams organize regular conference calls amongst their members as a way of working together across distances. There is a free service available at <https://www.freeconferencecall.com>. This is the same conference call service that the LAG board uses, and anyone can set up an account very easily.

Because each state team is unique, we encourage your teams to find what division of responsibilities works best for you, taking into consideration the size and complexity of your state. We ask you to tap each of your members' individual strengths and find how you can most efficiently and effectively work together.

Please keep before you this unified vision: Each state team must garner the support of your state's members of Congress in order for the LTA to be passed. Below are the two functional leadership roles your team needs to incorporate into your structure in whatever way you judge best.

- **Communication** – This individual will be referred to as the team's *Liaison*. He or she will help with the following: communication and coordination of advocacy efforts among members; tracking which Congressional districts are sufficiently represented by team members, and which districts are not, in order to determine which geographic areas need the team's focused recruiting efforts.
- **Strategy** – This individual will be referred to as the team's *Strategist*. He or she will familiarize himself or herself with each US Congressional district in the state, using a map such as this one to get oriented (<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map>), and each corresponding member of Congress by looking at their websites. This awareness will help lead the team in their efforts to win the co-sponsorship of every member of Congress representing their state, giving first priority to Key Members of Congress in leadership or who sit on a committee that will hold a hearing on our bill. These Key Member districts are denoted in red on your team's contact sheet.

Depending on the size of your state, it is conceivable that one person could fill both roles. On the contrary, in more populous states, it might be necessary for multiple people to handle each function, either by forming a committee to share the responsibility or by dividing the state into regions or by Congressional Districts. Teams may also appoint other positions within their team as they see fit, and/or expand on the responsibilities described above.

Anyone who has a designated responsibility should notify us of such by emailing us at info@LymphedemaTreatmentAct.org. Keeping us informed of your teams division of responsibilities will enable us to best support and assist you.

What Are My Responsibilities As A State Team Member?

The LAG board will convey to team members, via email communications, what the priorities are at any given time. Team members should make every reasonable effort to participate in whatever the current project/priority is.

However, simultaneously, or in between these LAG-directed tasks, team members should be self-directed and working on other advocacy efforts as their schedule permits. To aid you with this please use our [Advocacy Handbook](#), which can be viewed and downloaded for this page of our website – <http://lymphedematreatmentact.org/advocacy-handbook/>.

As a member of your state's team you will be helping us to step up our ground game, extend our reach for the Lymphedema Treatment Act and help the millions of Americans with lymphedema. We are grateful for your participation!

