

## National Lymphedema Conference 2021: Abstract Submission

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Preferred presentation method	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Poster <input type="checkbox"/> Oral
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Abstract Title	<b>The Lymphedema Advocacy Group: Building Community, Giving Voice, Advancing Care</b>
<p>Abstract Text (<i>maximum 300 words</i>)</p> <p>On this poster, the authors review the history and ongoing work of the Lymphedema Advocacy Group (LAG), an all-volunteer grassroots advocacy organization in the United States, comprised of patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and industry partners. Their mission is to advance care through improved insurance coverage for lymphedema compression supplies. LAG leads and supports efforts at both the state and federal levels, and their members have already succeeded in passing laws in several states, but the group's primary focus is the passage of the federal Lymphedema Treatment Act (LTA), an active bill in the United States Congress.</p> <p>The poster begins with Executive Director Heather Ferguson and her discovery of the gap in insurance coverage for compression garments for her child with primary lymphedema, and how that led to her founding of the group and their legislative efforts. The story of inception is followed by a timeline of the critical steps in the group's 11-year journey of building a nationwide grassroots effort, learning to navigate the American legislative system, and the progress of the bill through to the present time. Although further work remains, the group has taken a little-known disease and turned it into the most broadly supported healthcare bill in the United States Congress.</p> <p>The authors outline the effective advocacy strategies instituted by the group including informal and formal organizational steps, networking and coalition building, training and activating advocates, utilizing technology to enable advocates, communicating with legislators and their staff, and assimilation of recently published research findings to support improvements to patient care, and how that will translate into an overall reduction in lymphedema-related healthcare spending. Example products and photographs are included. The authors hope that the successful strategies presented in this poster can serve as a blueprint to guide and assist other groups in affecting positive change in their communities.</p>	