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June 7, 2019

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

On behalf of the more than 100,000 members of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA), I am writing you to extend our support for the Lymphedema Treatment Act, S.518, which will provide increased assistance to Medicare beneficiaries who are impacted by lymphedema.

The mission of APTA is to build a community to advance the physical therapy profession to improve the health of society. Physical therapists play a unique role in society in prevention, wellness, fitness, health promotion, and management of disease and disability by serving as a dynamic bridge between health and health services delivery for individuals across the age span.

APTA has long supported this legislation's purpose to provide Medicare coverage and payment for lymphedema treatment items and supplies (eg, compression garments, bandaging systems, and other devices that are necessary). This legislation offers detailed descriptions of the types of items that would be covered, while allowing the Secretary discretion to allow more if deemed effective. Currently, many of these items and services are either not covered or only covered on a limited basis. Passage of this legislation takes important steps to reduce the total health care costs associated with lymphedema and ensures access to these supplies for individuals with lymphatic impairments and conditions.

Physical therapists play a crucial role in the treatment of lymphedema. While there is no cure for this condition, early detection, treatment, and management can help alleviate symptoms. Physical therapists assist in manual lymph drainage and fitting for compression garment wear after the process is complete. They also aid in helping patients with the proper exercises to improve cardiovascular health, which in some cases may help decrease swelling. Furthermore, they provide critical information on how to avoid injury and infection, improve skin care, and use diet to decrease fluid retention.

We applaud you for your commitment to improving the lives of those with lymphedema. Please contact Baruch Humble, senior congressional affairs specialist, at baruchhumble@apta.org or 703/706-8509, if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,



Sharon L. Dunn, PT, PhD
Board-Certified Orthopaedic Clinical Specialist
President