



PRESS RELEASE

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Lawmakers Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Strengthen Lymphedema Treatment

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Representatives Dave Reichert (R-WA), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Leonard Lance (R-NJ), and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) introduced the Lymphedema Treatment Act, H.R. 930, to ensure Medicare coverage for the millions of Americans who suffer from Lymphedema.

“Individuals suffering from lymphedema should have equal access to treatment,” **said Rep. Reichert.** “Compression garments can make all the difference for the nearly six million individuals suffering from this chronic and debilitating disease. Closing the Medicare coverage gap for compression garments is a common-sense way to give patients real hope to fight back and live with the best possible quality of life.”

“Americans living with chronic illness deserve a health care system that delivers necessary treatments. Lymphedema should be no exception,” **said Rep. Blumenauer.** “Our legislation will help ease the financial burden faced by those afflicted by this disease to improve their quality of life.”

“Patient care must be at the forefront of every debate. Six million Americans are stuck in the coverage gap and unable to obtain Medicare coverage for the equipment and therapies to combat Lymphedema,” **said Rep. Lance, a member of the House Health Subcommittee and co-chairman of the House Rare Disease Caucus.** “This bill will improve patient care and reduce overall health care costs associated with this chronic disease.”

“Lymphedema is a painful and costly condition, one that I have seen in an close friend of mine,” **said Rep. Schakowsky.** “I’m proud to join my colleagues in reintroducing legislation that would expand Medicare and allow us to provide millions Lymphedema patients with the life-changing care they need.”

“Lymphedema has a multitude of causes, both congenital and acquired, and when untreated leads to a marked increase in complications and overall healthcare costs,” **said Heather Ferguson,** founder and executive director of the Lymphedema Advocacy Group. “Substantial clinical evidence shows that the most effective treatment involves the use of doctor prescribed compression garments. The Lymphedema Treatment Act will ensure that Medicare beneficiaries have the necessary medical supplies to manage this chronic and potentially debilitating condition. We are

grateful for our bill sponsors and their efforts to help the millions of Americans living with lymphedema maintain their health and quality of life."

Background

Lymphedema is a chronic condition resulting from damaged or inadequate lymph nodes or lymphatic vessels that afflicts millions of Americans. It is a disease that one can be born with but it is most often caused by cancer treatments that damage the body's lymph system or immune functions. Due to the painful swelling that results from lymphedema, compression therapy is an essential component of treatment but compression supplies are not covered by Medicare despite being an ongoing necessity. H.R. 930 closes this coverage gap by requiring Medicare to cover lymphedema compression items.

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