

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Cosponsor the Lymphedema Treatment Act to Help Millions of Medicare Beneficiaries Currently Lacking Treatment for Lymphedema

Dear Colleague:

Lymphedema has been called "[cancer treatment's dirty little secret](#)" and afflicts millions of Americans, yet Medicare beneficiaries currently lack coverage of compression supplies needed to effectively treat the condition. Lymphedema is progressive when left untreated and can put patients at greater risk for serious infection and disability. **To help patients successfully treat lymphedema and manage their symptoms, we urge you to join us in cosponsoring H.R. 3877, the *Lymphedema Treatment Act*.** This legislation will provide Medicare coverage of doctor-prescribed compression supplies while also helping to reduce total Medicare spending by decreasing the incidence of costly complications, co-morbidities and disabilities associated with the disease.

Lymphedema is a chronic condition resulting from the accumulation of lymph fluid which causes tissue swelling, most often in the arms or legs. It is estimated to afflict 1.5 to 3 million Medicare beneficiaries and 3 to 6 million Americans as a whole. While individuals can be born with a primary form of lymphedema, the majority of cases are secondary forms of lymphedema most often caused by cancer treatments that damage the body's lymph system or immune functions. For cancer patients, lymphedema is one of the most significant survivorship issues. Breast cancer, in particular, is one of the most common causes of secondary lymphedema with an incidence rate of 20 percent.

Fortunately, there is hope for lymphedema patients as the risks and complications associated with the disorder can be mitigated through Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT), which is considered the gold standard for treating lymphedema. In addition to manual lymph drainage and decongestive exercises, an essential component of CDT is compression therapy. Unfortunately, Medicare does not currently cover compression supplies. As a result, many Medicare patients cannot maintain their condition and experience an unnecessary loss of health and of function in the activities of daily living.

In order to improve the health care for lymphedema patients and decrease the rate of costly complications for cancer survivors, H.R. 3877 would provide Medicare coverage of medically necessary compression supplies. If you would like more information about the bill or to cosponsor, please contact Lindsay Manson in Rep. Reichert's office (5-7761), Kristen Donheffner in Rep. Blumenauer's office (5-4811), Molly McDonnell in Rep. Lance's office (5-5361) or Mike Goodman in Rep. Braley's office (5-2911).


Sincerely,




DAVE REICHERT
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



LEONARD LANCE
Member of Congress



BRUCE BRALEY
Member of Congress