



Oncology Nursing Society

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March 1, 2019

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for S. 518, the *Lymphedema Treatment Act*

Dear Senator Cantwell:

On behalf of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), I write to thank you for sponsoring S. 518, the *Lymphedema Treatment Act*. This bill will improve insurance coverage for compression supplies that are the cornerstone of lymphedema treatment.

As you well know, lymphedema is a chronic condition affecting millions of Americans that 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. Despite being an ongoing necessity, compression supplies are not covered by Medicare. Your legislation would close this coverage gap by requiring Medicare to cover lymphedema compression items under the Part B durable medical equipment (DME) benefit.

In addition to providing cancer treatment, oncology nurses maintain principal responsibility for managing treatment side-effects. Maximizing quality of life and minimizing treatment side-effects such as lymphedema are central goals of oncology nurses. This bill will afford our nurses the opportunity to be more effective caregivers and ultimately will result in more successful outcomes for cancer patients nationwide.

ONS is a professional organization of over 39,000 registered nurses and other health care providers dedicated to excellence in patient care, education, research, and administration in oncology nursing. ONS members are a diverse group of professionals who represent a variety of professional roles, practice settings, and subspecialty practice areas. Oncology nurses are leaders in the health care arena, committed to continuous learning and leading the transformation of cancer care by advocating for high-quality care for people with cancer.

Please know that ONS and its members very much appreciate your leadership on the issue of access to lymphedema treatment. We stand ready to work with you and your staff to reduce and prevent suffering from cancer. If ONS may be of assistance in this endeavor, please contact Donna (Dede) Sweeney, ONS Director of Government Affairs, at dsweeney@ons.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laura Fennimore".

Laura Fennimore, RN, DNP. NEA-BC
President, Oncology Nursing Society