

Jasmine Zheng M.D.
Assistant Professor

July 14, 2019

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

Dear Senator Cantwell:

On behalf of University of Pennsylvania Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, I'm writing to inform you that we would like to offer our formal endorsement of the Lymphedema Treatment Act (S.518/H.R.1948).

I am a practicing cancer physiatrist at Penn Medicine and frequently evaluate, diagnose, and manage lymphedema. Many of my patients have lymphedema as a result of cancer treatment, while others have lymphedema as a result of congenital lymphedema, Milroy's disease, Klippel-Trenaunay Syndrome, lipedema, organ transplantation, chronic venous insufficiency, or trauma. Despite the cause of lymphedema, the international standard of care for treatment includes lymphedema therapy and long term use of compression garments that at a minimum needs to be replaced every 6 months.

Lymphedema is a life-long condition that requires ongoing medical management along with continuous compression. The current international standard of care for lymphedema requires use of appropriate compression on a 24-hour basis. Failure to provide adequate compression can lead to significant medical, psychological and functional morbidity. Specifically, patients are left vulnerable to worsening lymphedema, potentially life-threatening cellulitis infections, chronic pain and non-healing wounds. Unfortunately, Medicare currently does not cover these medically necessary compression garments, despite the evidence for the increase in morbidity and mortality associated with untreated lymphedema and the international standard of care to treat with 24-hour compression garments. Furthermore, many patients are unable to financially afford the costs of compression garments that can be several hundred dollars a year.

I ask that you support the Lymphedema Treatment Act (S.518/H.R.1948) to ensure that your constituents receive the medically prescribed care that they need. Please contact me if any additional information is required.

Sincerely,



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