

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

U.S. Paralympic and National Champion Skier Thomas Charles Walsh to Advocate for the Lymphedema Treatment Act

*Childhood cancer survivor and elite athlete Walsh joins effort to pass the LTA
– the most supported healthcare bill in Congress*

Washington, D.C., September 24, 2018 – Thomas Charles Walsh – the two-time World Para Alpine Skiing World Cup winner – is headed to Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, September 26, to meet with federal lawmakers in support of the Lymphedema Treatment Act. The ski racer, who has lymphedema, has joined the grassroots movement and is calling on Congress to “**take the most supported healthcare bill across the finish line this year.**”

The [Lymphedema Treatment Act](#) (H.R.930/S.497) was introduced this session by Reps. Dave Reichert (R-WA), Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Leonard Lance (R-NJ), and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), as well as Sens. Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Maria Cantwell (D-WA). It will help alleviate suffering for the 3-5 million Americans who live with lymphedema by improving access to the doctor prescribed compression garments and supplies that effectively mitigate the effects of the illness. With 429 cosponsors, it is the top supported healthcare bill in Congress. “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,” said leading sponsor **Rep. Reichert** (R-WA).

The bipartisan team of Congressional champions for the LTA say the bill improves patient outcomes and strengthens Medicare. **Rep. Blumenauer** states “our legislation will help ease the financial burden faced by those afflicted by this disease to improve their quality of life.” **Senator Cantwell** sees the LTA as “a common-sense approach to improving care for Medicare beneficiaries living with lymphedema while reducing costly hospitalizations.” And **Senator Grassley** says, “Medicare ought to reflect the modern practice of medicine.”

Thomas Walsh will share with Congress his first-hand experience with lymphedema, which he says is the most challenging after-effect of his cancer treatment. At age 23 Thomas has come a long way-- from his grueling struggle with cancer in his early teens to the conquering of mountains, including some of the steepest slopes around the globe. Growing up in Vail, CO, his talent in winter sports put him in a circle of elite athletes, but at age 14 when he was diagnosed with Ewing’s sarcoma, he had to focus his efforts to save his own life. The numerous after-effects of his treatments have left him physically challenged with nerve damage, a limping gait, and the life-long management of lymphedema. Mentally, however, the competitor remains, using his talent and discipline to continue skiing and inspire others--even in the halls of Congress.

As support continues to climb among members of Congress, leadership is taking notice. **House Republican Conference Chair Rep. Cathy McMorris Rogers** (R-WA) is a cosponsor and offers her support “so that patients with lymphedema have the tools to manage their own health and live productively.”

Thomas hopes his visit will shine a light on this bill to assure its passage this year. In the words of this American champion, “**Take the LTA across the finish line this year.**”

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Thomas Walsh Media:

[2018 Winter Paralympics Featured Athlete -- Lester Holt](#)
[2018 Winter Paralympics -- Emotional Finish](#)
www.facebook.com/t.walsh.ski
www.instagram.com/twalnutz/

Photos—for use only with a story pertaining to the Lymphedema Treatment Act. Please contact Judy Woodward.

Thomas Walsh Highlights/Achievements:

2017 Colorado Snowsports Hall of Fame's Adaptive Athlete of the Year Award
2018 Winter Paralympics Alpine Skiing: SL - 5th, GS - 7th, SG - 13th
Three-time U.S. Paralympics Alpine Skiing National A Team member
Two-time World Para Alpine Skiing World Cup winner
Twelve-time World Para Alpine Skiing World Cup podium finisher
Multi-discipline U.S. National Champion

More information:

[Congressional Info Packet— http://lymphedematreatmentact.org/about-the-bill/ta-info-packet-for-congress/](http://lymphedematreatmentact.org/about-the-bill/ta-info-packet-for-congress/)
[Press Kit — http://lymphedematreatmentact.org/media/press-kit/](http://lymphedematreatmentact.org/media/press-kit/)

Background:

Lymphedema (chronic lymphatic system failure) has a multitude of causes. It is marked by an accumulation of lymph fluid (swelling) in parts of the body where lymph nodes or lymphatic vessels are damaged or inadequate. Millions of Americans are affected by this chronic but treatable condition, most commonly from cancer. Compression supplies are the most effective and most commonly prescribed treatment.

The Lymphedema Advocacy Group is an all-volunteer organization of patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals and industry partners. Our mission is to advance lymphedema care in the United States by advocating for improved insurance coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of the disease. For this purpose we work to increase awareness of and education about lymphedema amongst lawmakers, insurance providers and other relevant entities. We support attempts to improve coverage at both the state and federal levels and encourage all members of the lymphedema community to become active participants in this process. Our primary objective at this time is passage of the Lymphedema Treatment Act. The Lymphedema Advocacy Group is a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization.