



## Lymphedema Coming to Capitol Hill: Lymphedema Advocacy Group Announces 2016 Lobby Days

*Seventy-One Volunteers together with Industry Partner BSN medical ask Congress to Cosponsor Lymphedema Treatment Act*

**WASHINGTON D.C.**, April 18, 2016 – The [Lymphedema Advocacy Group](#) today announced the 2016 Lymphedema Lobby Days taking place April 19-20, 2016, in Washington D.C. The event gives lymphedema patients, their family members, caregivers, healthcare professionals and a coalition of supporting organizations an opportunity to lobby members of congress to support the Lymphedema Treatment Act (LTA). The federal [bill](#) aims to improve insurance coverage for the medically necessary, doctor-prescribed compression supplies that are the cornerstone of lymphedema treatment.

Lymphedema, a chronic condition that affects 3-5 million Americans<sup>1</sup>, is swelling in one or more extremities resulting from impaired flow of the lymphatic system. In the U.S. and Western countries, lymphedema occurs most commonly as a complication of lymph node dissection for cancer treatment<sup>2</sup>. Untreated or inadequately treated lymphedema is progressive, leading to complications, comorbidities, loss of function, disability, and in some cases, death. There is no known cure.

Currently, Medicare does not cover the compression supplies used in daily lymphedema treatment. The LTA seeks to amend Medicare statute to allow for coverage of compression bandages, supplies and garments used to reduce lymphedema related swelling, and to prevent its recurrence. Compression is an integral component of the standard of care for the treatment of lymphedema known as Complete Decongestive Therapy (CDT). Although this legislation relates specifically to a change in Medicare law, it would set a precedent for Medicaid and private insurers to follow<sup>3</sup>.

“Compression is to lymphedema what medication is to many other diseases - indispensable!” said Heather Ferguson, founder and executive director of the Lymphedema Advocacy Group. “Insurance coverage for their doctor-prescribed compression treatment supplies will enable lymphedema patients to avoid costly complications and debilitating disease progression. Passage of the Lymphedema Treatment Act will help to minimize the healthcare costs associated with this chronic disease, while allowing the millions of men, women and children affected by lymphedema to live a better quality of life.”

“According to several studies published in journals, lymphedema is costly and compression therapy reduces disease progression, complications and associated cost of care,” said Tyler Palmer, vice president of Consumer Health and Lymphology for [BSN medical](#). “This is especially emphasized in preventable advanced stages of the disease. The LTA will enable coverage of compression supplies under Durable Medical Equipment, as no other proposed revision of reform of Medicare will rectify this gap in coverage.”

### **About the Lymphedema Advocacy Group**

The [Lymphedema Advocacy Group](#) (LAG) is an all-volunteer nationwide organization of patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals and industry partners. Its 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, the organization works to increase awareness of and education about lymphedema amongst lawmakers, insurance providers and other relevant entities. LAG supports attempts to improve coverage at both the state and federal levels and encourages all members of the lymphedema community to become active participants in this process.

Visit <http://www.LymphedemaTreatmentAct.org> to learn more, or contact us at [info@LymphedemaTreatmentAct.org](mailto:info@LymphedemaTreatmentAct.org).

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<sup>1,2</sup> <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3652571/>

<sup>3,4</sup> <http://www.lymphedematreatmentact.org>