



April 13, 2017

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

The Honorable Chuck Grassley  
135 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Support of S. 497, the Lymphedema Treatment Act**

Dear Senators Cantwell and Grassley:

On behalf of the Oncology Nursing Society (ONS), I write to thank you for introducing S. 497, the Lymphedema Treatment Act. S. 497 will improve insurance coverage for the doctor-prescribed compression supplies that are the cornerstone of lymphedema treatment.

As you 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. S. 497 would close this coverage gap by requiring Medicare to cover lymphedema compression items.

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. S. 497 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 healthcare 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 roles, practice settings, and subspecialty practice areas. Oncology nurses are leaders in the healthcare 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. We would be happy to discuss ways in which ONS may be of assistance in this endeavor, and would encourage you to contact Alec Stone, MA, MPA, ONS Director of Health Policy, at [astone@ons.org](mailto:astone@ons.org). We look forward to engaging in an ongoing dialogue to address issues of importance to our cancer patients and ways in which we can promote public health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan M. Schneider".

Susan Schneider, PhD, RN, AOCN®, FAAN  
President  
Oncology Nursing Society