December 10, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leaders Schumer and McCarthy:

The undersigned organizations write to you regarding the Lymphedema Treatment Act, H.R.1948 / S.518, which has been cosponsored by 372 House members and 69 Senators, making it the most supported healthcare bill currently before Congress.

We are pleased that this bill was included in H.R. 3 along with several other bipartisan measures. We also recognize that compromises on the significant issues addressed in H.R. 3 are not likely to occur by the end of the year.

On behalf of the 1.5-3 million Medicare beneficiaries living with chronic lymphatic system failure (lymphedema), we urge you to publicly express your support for the Lymphedema Treatment Act, and work to include the bill in whatever compromise package emerges from the ongoing negotiations in other legislation.

Lymphedema, like other chronic conditions, has no cure, but its effects can be mitigated through proper management. As stated by the National Cancer Institute, “The goal of lymphedema treatment centers on controlling limb swelling and minimizing complications.”¹

The most vital components of treatment are medical compression garments and supplies prescribed to reduce complications and disease progression by controlling swelling. For example, in 2004, the Commonwealth of Virginia mandated private insurance and Medicaid coverage for lymphedema compression supplies. This coverage has proven to improve patient outcomes and quality of life, reduce utilization, and reduce costs. Specifically, a ten-year longitudinal study of Virginia’s lymphedema treatment mandate found over a 40% reduction in physician and therapy visits, and a greater than 50% reduction in hospitalizations.²

As policymakers strive to help beneficiaries live healthier and more productive lives, we encourage you to pass this commonsense, bipartisan legislation. The measure will address the growing number

of cancer-related cases, as well as those beneficiaries who acquire lymphedema from other causes or who are born with a compromised lymphatic system.

The Lymphedema Treatment Act is a bipartisan, common-sense solution that closes an unintended gap in Medicare coverage. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) acknowledged the necessity of compression therapy in the treatment and management of lymphedema in its National Coverage Determination for Pneumatic Compression Pumps.3

The federal government recognized its importance when it included coverage for compression garments for the treatment of breast cancer-related lymphedema in the Women’s Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998.4 Furthermore, lymphedema compression supplies are already covered by Veterans Affairs, TriCare, and Medicaid plans in 44 states plus the District of Columbia.5

It’s time to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries with lymphedema have coverage for these vital, prescription medical supplies that are the cornerstone in the standard of care for the chronic condition. It is imperative that Congress pass the Lymphedema Treatment Act this year.

Sincerely,

Heather Ferguson
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Lymphedema Advocacy Group
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704-965-0620

Together with the following organizations and hospitals:

- Alliance of Dedicated Cancer Centers
- American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
- American Lymphedema Framework Project
- American Nurses Association
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- American Physical Therapy Association
- Association of American Cancer Institutes
- Breast Cancer Action
- Cancer Legal Care

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Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Disability Rights Legal Center
Fox Chase Cancer Center
James Cancer Hospital & Solove Research Institute at The Ohio State University
Lighthouse Lymphedema Network
Living Beyond Breast Cancer
Lymphatic Education & Research Network
Moffitt Cancer Center
National Lymphedema Network
Oncology Nursing Society
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Penn Medicine Cancer Rehabilitation
Phelan McDermid Syndrome Foundation
Seattle Cancer Care Alliance
Society for Vascular Nursing
Society of Gynecologic Oncology
Susan G. Komen
University of Vermont Cancer Center
Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society

CC:
Sen. Chuck Grassley, Chair, Committee on Finance
Sen. Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, Committee on Finance
Rep. Frank Pallone, Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Rep. Greg Walden, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Rep. Richard Neal, Chair, Committee on Ways and Means
Rep. Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways and Means
Sen. Maria Cantwell, Committee on Finance
Sen. Todd Young, Committee on Finance
Rep. Jan Schakowsky Committee on Energy and Commerce
Rep. Buddy Carter, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Rep. Earl Blumenauer, Committee on Ways and Means
Rep. Mike Kelly, Committee on Ways and Means