

March 2022

The Honourable (First Name) (Last Name)

MHA for (Specify Riding)

Dear Mr./Mrs./Miss/Ms. [name here]

Re: Support for Lymphedema Provincial Working Group

As a constituent in your riding, I want to introduce myself as a resident in your area, concerned about people living with lymphedema. I am sure you have heard of lymphedema and know that, at the request of the Lymphedema Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (LANL), for the past several years the NL Minister of Health and Community Services (HCS) has proclaimed **March 6th as World Lymphedema Day**.

Research from The Canadian Lymphedema Framework (CLF) indicates there are approximately 1 million Canadians suffering from Lymphedema and chronic edema. In NL this translates to approximately **15,000 people** with an incurable disease, many of whom currently receive no Provincial Health Care funding or treatment.

- The Lymphedema Community in NL is looking forward to some desperately needed changes to:
- Identify and share appropriate educational materials
- Explore expanded coverage for compression garments.
- Work with Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information to determine the incidence by creating a disease code for lymphedema (both primary and secondary)
- Explore (and improve or expand) lymphedema services throughout the Regional Health Authorities (RHA), particularly for areas off the Avalon
- Engage the MUN School of Nursing, Newfoundland and Labrador Faculty of Medicine and other educational avenues within health care professionals to raise awareness.

Although it took two years to do so, in late 2019 a Provincial Lymphedema Working Group was formed with representatives from each RHA, HCS, and LANL. The representative from HCS left his position in early 2020. Then Covid-19 arrived. Subsequent attempts to have HCS revive this group were rebuffed, initially by a statement that there was no one to take this working group on, and later by no response at all.

I welcome the opportunity to provide information to help in a greater understanding of the physical, emotional, and financial challenges faced by people living with this incurable disease.

I am asking for your support in this endeavor to provide for education, treatment, and compression garments - all essential components of managing the disease and preventing potential life-threatening infections.