

A message from us regarding the COVID-19 situation

We are reaching out to you during this difficult time.

This global pandemic is a difficult and unsettling time for everyone. We especially empathize with everyone within the lymphedema community and hope you are coping well. Whether you are a patient who can no longer get to your clinic for therapy sessions, a therapist or clinician who is now feeling helpless in not being able to care for patients in the same way, a volunteer with a provincial lymphedema association who is continuing to support their members, or a company still trying to provide the compression supplies and services to those in need – our heart goes out to you.

Many of you across the country are now self-isolating and working from home. We want to assure you that the Canadian Lymphedema Framework is doing the same: still operating, even though the doors to the physical office in Toronto are shut temporarily due to quarantine. As a national organization with board members and volunteers from across Canada, the CLF has many years of experience operating remotely with teleconferences, online files and collaborating platforms etc. We continue to do so now.

Pathways magazine is alive and well. The Spring issue has left the mailing house and we are hoping that without too many postal delays, it should be reaching your mailboxes very shortly. Planning for the Summer issue is also well underway. The Physicians Awareness card was distributed both in print and digitally to over 78,000 English and French-speaking physicians across Canada and our other projects are continuing to progress and move forward. New initiatives such as online webinars to deliver lymphedema education remotely are what the CLF will focus on in 2020.

We want to take this opportunity to thank our industry supporters. The CLF Board recently connected personally with our key industry partners, who have provided assurances that their support to the CLF and the lymphedema community remains strong during these unprecedented times. They have been by our side for the last ten years and we trust will be there for the next ten years as well.

Some of you have been asking whether there is specific advice for lymphedema patients regarding the COVID-19 virus. Our medical advisors agree that, except perhaps for those with unusual forms of primary/genetic lymphedema or patients currently undergoing cancer treatment – the same advice for the general public applies to those living with lymphedema:

frequent and thorough hand-washing (using hand sanitizers as much as possible)

social distancing – staying home were possible

We might suggest for patients, that perhaps you can use the extra time at home in self-isolation to wrap (bandage) more, connect with family, friends and colleagues through social media. Take the time to send a note to your lymphedema patient or therapist to let them know you are thinking of them.

The CLF has always maintained our philosophy of trusting evidence-based science to guide us. Now is the time to trust our elected officials and Minister of Health to guide the public. Stay informed but be careful of your sources. Refer to your federal and provincial government websites for pandemic and stay at home instructions.

STAY HOME. KEEP HEALTHY. BE KIND TO YOURSELF AND EACH OTHER.

Sincerely,

The CLF Board of Directors