

INTRODUCTION TO LYMPHEDEMA AND THE BC LYMPHEDEMA ASSOCIATION

Research demonstrates more effective cancer treatments are resulting in an increasing number of cancer survivors. For example:

- Overall survival rate for breast cancer has increased to 88%.
- Among women ages 40 – 69, survival rates are even higher.

Unfortunately, the occurrence of diseases that are a direct consequence of cancer treatment is also rising. Lymphedema, a chronic progressive disease, is a common consequence of cancer treatments that remove or damage lymph nodes or vessels.

Lymphedema can also be caused by injury, trauma or congenital defects in the lymphatic system. Therefore, if you haven't yet had a patient with Lymphedema, likely you will in the future.

Lymphedema of an arm, leg or other body parts is an under-recognized disorder, often not well managed, causing significant hardship to patients and their families. Delays in diagnosis or treatment can result in rapid and unchecked progression of the disease and can lead to:

- Irreversible malformation in the limbs
- Life threatening infections that require hospitalization
- Physical disabilities
- Unemployment
- Psychological distress, isolation and depression

Reducing delays in diagnosis and/or treatment and introducing effective treatments can result in dramatic improvements in health and lifestyle

Please let your patients know that options for management of Lymphedema exist and that help and guidance is available to them through the British Columbia Lymphedema Association. BCLA is a nonprofit, charitable association dedicated to supporting people living with Lymphedema to minimize the negative impact on their quality of life. BCLA helps patients diagnosed with Lymphedema access accurate information by means of:

- A website, bclymph.org
- An information phone line
- Brochures
- Conferences
- Workshops
- A national magazine: Pathways
- Support groups

If additional Lymphedema information brochures are required please don't hesitate to contact BCLA at info@bclymph.org.

