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## Forward Momentum: Future Steps in Lymphedema Management

Presented by  
The American Cancer Society (ACS)  
Lymphology Association of North America (LANA)  
Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Department of Surgery  
Summit Co-chairs, Dr. Paula Stewart and Dr. Justin Sacks

October 7 - 8, 2023

*Review by summit participant and lymphedema patient, Joan White, Director of Lighthouse Lymphedema Network*

**Forward Momentum** marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1998 American Cancer Society Lymphedema Workshop which resulted in the founding of LANA. Much has changed in 25 years! This invitation-only Summit plans to publish manuscripts from each of the topic teams and workshop task forces in 2024.

Friday night preceding the Summit, Stryker hosted a Meet and Greet Reception at The Royal Sonesta Chase Park Plaza St. Louis. Stryker is the developer of the SPY Portable Handheld Imager (SPY-PHI) which utilizes SPY Fluorescence Imaging technology and allows surgeons to visualize fluid flow in vessels and related tissue perfusion during plastic, microsurgical, reconstructive and gastrointestinal procedures.

Dr. Robert Smith of the American Cancer Society opened the Summit Saturday morning, remotely welcoming guests and encouraging lively discussion for the weekend. Saturday was a day of excellent presentations covering the current state of lymphedema diagnosis, treatment, compression, surgery, precautions and more. 25 expert faculty members prepared and presented throughout the day. Presentation videos can be found on [LANA's website](#).

On Sunday, 64 delegates were divided into six workshop groups. The delegates included researchers, physicians, clinicians, training program directors, support group leaders and patient advocates. Each workshop was tasked to create a consensus statement on a different topic.

1. A guide for surgeons and lymphedema stakeholders on appropriate candidate selection for lymphatic surgery.
2. A guide for pre- and post-operative management of patients undergoing lymphedema surgery.

3. Updating the risk reduction recommendations for patients at risk for or managing lymphedema.
4. Aiding the medical community in identifying predictive noncancer-related factors that influence the development of lymphedema in patients during cancer treatment and compound the individual's risk of developing lymphedema.
5. Identifying the essential components of the decongestive phase of complete decongestive therapy (CDT).
6. Identifying the essential components of the maintenance phase of complete decongestive therapy (CDT).

Each workshop had energetic discussions and came up with recommendations presented to the entire audience. A video of these presentations is also available on the [LANA website](#).

During lunch, Heather Ferguson of the Lymphedema Advocacy Group presented on the successful passage of the national lymphedema bill, commonly known as the Lymphedema Treatment Act. She thanked all of those who helped obtain the passage of the bill after 12 ½ years of education, lobbying and promotion.

Moving forward, the workshop participants will continue to meet and brainstorm ideas for topics that could become research opportunities. There is a real need for more randomized controlled trials, but funding is a huge issue. Therapists, could you convince your hospital or clinic to allow you to do a study or survey for lymphedema patients? In addition to studies on lymphedema due to all types of cancers, there are studies needed on many topics, such as: Do blood pressure cuffs cause or trigger lymphedema? Should compression be worn during air travel? Should garments be worn when exercising? How important is exercise? How do wounds, sunburn, trauma, skin punctures, Kinesio taping, Shock wave therapy or fear affect lymphedema? Does lymphedema therapy cause behavioral change? Are there risk factors that increase the possibility of getting lymphedema, and what are they? Is life expectancy for a patient with lymphedema dependent on where the patient lives? What is the relationship between lymphedema, obesity and BMI? The list goes on.

There is a lot to consider as we continue this *Forward Momentum*. We have come a long way since my diagnosis in the early 1990's, but we have so much further to go. The current momentum will be passed on to the next generation of researchers, therapists, and physicians with the encouragement of those who have forged the way. With the passage of the Lymphedema Treatment Act, we have assurance regarding necessary products for patients, and hope for a better quality of life. Thank you to LANA, ACS, and all the vendors and researchers who continue to pursue answers, improve practices, and innovate products that assure us patients that we are not forgotten.

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Lighthouse Lymphedema Network  
10240 Crescent Ridge Dr, Roswell, GA 30076

Lighthouse Lymphedema Network is a 501(c)(3) organization with the goal of educating, promoting awareness, and providing support for individuals who have lymphedema or have an interest in lymphedema. All donations are tax-deductible. [Donate](#) now.