Guideline for Compression Garments for Adults with Malignancy Related Lymphoedema: Eligibility, Supply and Costing

1. Purpose
This Guideline provides recommendations regarding eligibility criteria and payment responsibilities for the provision of compression garments to adult clients with malignancy related lymphoedema.

2. Scope
This Guideline provides a recommended approach to follow for Hospital and Health Services (HHS) clinicians who prescribe compression garments to adults with malignancy related lymphoedema and the facilities which provide these garments and/ or which are responsible for the payments of these garments.

3. Related documents
Accreditation References (e.g. EQuIP and other criteria/standards)

Forms and templates:
- The Medicare Agreement Act
- Standing Offer Arrangement QH 742 : Vascular Support products
- Outpatient Services Implementation Standard ; QH-IMP-300-1:2010
- National Lymphoedema Practitioners Register
4. Guideline for provision of compression garments

Eligibility to receive compression garments free of charge

- Clients meeting all of the following criteria should be provided with compression garments free of charge:
  - malignancy related lymphoedema
  - a clinical prescription
  - a current medical referral (i.e. within the last 12 months)
  - aged 16 years or over
  - outpatient
  - holding one of the following cards:
    - Centrelink Pensioner Card
    - Centrelink Health Care Card
  - permanent resident of Queensland
  - Medicare eligible.

- The HHS may determine local compression garment provision arrangements for clients not meeting all of the above criteria.

- Where a client wishes to obtain a compression garment but is not provided a compression garment by the HHS, the HHS should assist the client to obtain the contact details of garment manufacturers/suppliers.

- Despite ineligibility for free garment provision, clients should not be excluded from therapy intervention, prescription, fitting and problem solving for self-funded garments.

Clinical prescription of compression garments

- Compression garments should only be provided to clients where there is a documented clinical prescription.

- As good clinical practice, and for the purposes of determining eligibility as per section 4.1, clinical prescriptions for compression garments should be made by appropriately trained and experienced clinicians. Clinical prescriptions from private practitioners should also be accepted for the purposes of determining eligibility as per section.

- All clinicians should prescribe ready-to-wear garments as a first preference where the clinician considers the ready-to-wear option to provide the same or better treatment effect to a custom made garment. The intent of this preference is to minimise costs to clients and/or the HHS.

- Replacement garments should be prescribed based on review of clinical need.
Providing compression garments to clients

- The HHS within which the client resides (their primary residential address) should meet the cost of prescribed compression garments provided to eligible outpatient clients.
- For eligible clients, the compression therapy garment should be provided, where possible, by the facility, within the patient’s HHS and closest to the patient’s residence.
- When a client is transferred or referred from one HHS or facility to another (e.g. moving residence or transfer from an acute facility to an outpatient service), the HHS or facility transferring care should complete and document a referral process. Where available, this referral should include details of the most recent medical referral, the most recent garment prescription and details of the garments provided.
- When a client is transferred or referred from one HHS or facility to another, a receiving clinician (in the client’s residential HHS or facility) should review the client at an interval negotiated (and documented in the referral) with the referring clinician.
- General information regarding this policy and the eligibility criteria should be made easily available to adults with malignancy related lymphoedema.

5. Review

This Guideline is due for review on: 24/04/2016

Date of Last Review: new document

Supersedes: Nil

6. Business Area Contact

Allied Health Professions’ Office of Queensland

7. Definitions of terms used in the policy and supporting documents

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition / Explanation / Details</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compression garments</td>
<td>Compression garments are firmly fitting elastic garments which can help to reduce the swelling associated with lymphoedema. Compression garments should be fitted professionally and replaced when they lose their elasticity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lymphoedema</td>
<td>Lymphoedema is the accumulation of excessive amounts of protein-rich (lymphatic) fluid resulting in swelling of one or more regions of the body. This is due to a mechanical failure of the lymphatic system and occurs when the demand for lymphatic drainage exceeds the capacity of the lymphatic circulation. The condition usually affects the limb(s) although it may also involve the trunk, breast, head and neck or genital area.</td>
<td>Australasian Lymphology Association</td>
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### Malignancy related lymphoedema (also known as secondary lymphoedema)

Secondary lymphoedema can occur after treatment for cancer, when lymph nodes are removed from the body by surgery or damaged by radiotherapy. This can stop the lymph fluid from flowing freely through the lymphatic system and can cause fluid to build up in some parts of the body. Lymphoedema may affect the arm after treatment of nodes in the armpit, or swelling may occur in the leg if nodes in the groin are removed. Facial swelling may also occur if local nodes are affected.

Estimates suggest that about 20% of patients treated for melanoma, breast, gynaecological or prostate cancers will develop lymphoedema. There is no cure, but appropriate management and daily care can reduce swelling, improve movement and prevent infections.

### Lymphoedema trained clinicians who may prescribe compression garments

Clinicians who meet the following requirements:
- Holders of Level 1 Lymphoedema Training Certificate accredited by the Australasian Lymphology Association (ALA) AND
- Recency of practice by demonstration of clinical experience in compression garment prescription within the previous two years.
- AND
- Continued Professional Development of 50 points in the previous two years as set out in the ALA Lymphoedema Continuing Professional Development program.
- AND/OR Category 1 registration on the National Lymphoedema Practitioners Register of the Australasian Lymphology Association.

### Clinical prescription

Only lymphoedema trained clinicians, as defined above, should prescribe compression garments for adults with malignancy related lymphoedema. This excludes Category 2 registered practitioners.

### Ready-to-wear compression garments

Also referred to as ‘off the shelf’, these garments are available in a fixed range of sizes and suitable for most patients in the prevention and treatment of lymphoedema. Garments are available in various compression levels to meet the needs of different patients and can be ordered via manufacturers and suppliers under SOA.

### Custom made compression garments

Also referred to as ‘made to measure’, these garments are made to the specifications of the patient. These garments are more expensive than ready to wear garments and may take 5-10 days to manufactured and delivered.

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**8. Approval and Implementation**

**Policy Custodian:**

Chief Allied Health Officer, Allied Health Professions’ Office of Queensland, Health Service and Clinical Innovation Division

**Responsible Executive Team Member:**

Chief Operating Officer and Deputy Director-General, Health Service and Clinical Innovation Division
Department of Health: Compression Garments for Adults with Malignancy Related Lymphoedema: Eligibility, Supply and Costing Guideline

Approving Officer:
Ian Maynard, Director-General, Queensland Department of Health

Approval date: 21 October 2014
Effective from: 24 April 2013

Version Control

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<th>Version</th>
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