



**THE LYMPHEDEMA ASSOCIATION OF SASKATCHEWAN INC. (LAS)** is a non-profit organization founded in 2004 (then known as the Saskatchewan Lymphovenous Learning Association Inc.- SLLA) by a group of 8 people who recognized the need to help those who have or are at risk of developing lymphedema and related lymphatic disorders. We strive to be a learning association, committed to ongoing education. LAS works to empower affected individuals and their families to successfully manage these conditions.

## LAS GOALS

- To promote health by providing an annual symposium on lymphedema management for health professionals and patients.
- To promote health and support by providing workshops and educational material for health professionals and patients on matters relating to diagnosing and treating lymphedema.
- To provide support for those affected by lymphedema by offering education and counselling and by establishing mutual support groups; and
- To undertake activities incidental and ancillary to the attainment of the above charitable purpose.

## LAS History

### 2004-2007

SLLA continued to work on the by-laws of the organization, developed the first brochure and contacted potential new members to increase their membership. In 2007, the executive discussed dissolving the organization because of the difficulty of gaining new members.

### 2008-2009

The executive were determined to continue with SLLA. Communication between SLLA and the Canadian Lymphedema Framework increased and SLLA participated in the Networking Conference calls.

A power point presentation was purchased from the Academy of Lymphatic Studies for presentations on Lymphedema. Members began speaking and distributing pamphlets to organizations such as Hope Cancer, Breast Cancer Action Saskatchewan and the nurse's organization in Saskatoon.

### 2009-2010

SLLA wrote 3 letters to the Saskatchewan Health Minister regarding the lack of resources in our provinces for lymphedema patients. One letter was from a primary lymphedema patient, the second letter from a secondary lymphedema patient and the third from a Lymphedema Therapist.

Roxanne Thomas MacLean from the University

of Saskatchewan spoke about her lymphedema related research project at the AGM.

### 2010-2011

March 6th was declared Lymphedema Awareness in Saskatchewan and our website was launched on that day.

The first fund raising began with a Pancake Breakfast in Regina, Steak Night in Saskatoon, Ladies night Out in Prince Albert and a provincial raffle with total funds of \$13,534.77.

A SLLA Booth was set up at the Prince Albert District Wellness Expo and Focus on Women (an annual event); a one day lymphedema workshop was held in Regina with rural therapists being the target audience.

The first executive member attended the International Lymphedema Framework Conference in Toronto.

### 2011-2012

The name of the organization was changed from Saskatchewan Lymphovenous Learning Association Inc. to the Lymphedema Association of Saskatchewan Inc. (LAS).

The Ministry of Health convened a Lymphedema Working Group, which included several LAS members, to review best practices, treatment services, policies, and procedures in the prevention and treatment of lymphedema in the province of Saskatchewan. A summary report

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# LAS History

outlining possible solutions to address gaps in lymphedema services was submitted to Minister of Health (The Lymphedema Working Group 2011-12 Summary Report).

Minister of Health Response:

- \$100,000 in funding towards education, prevention and training
- \$250,000 provided to SAIL for the purpose and distribution of compression pumps
- Review of the policy and processes for the SAIL Compression Pump and Garment Program

The first Education packages were assembled for patients, doctors and other medical professions.

LAS partnered with the Continuing Physical Education Therapy Department to host a two-day health professional Lymphedema Management Symposium and Public forum in Regina, SK. The key note speakers were Dr. Andrea Cheville from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester MN, Janet McFarland and Dorit Tidhar.

## 2012-2013

The Lymphedema Implementation Group was established to contribute to prevention and education initiatives and policy and process review of the SAIL Compression Pump and Garment programs resulting in the following:

- CDT training for 13 additional public therapists to service each of the 13 Saskatchewan health regions
- Purchase and distribution of MLD compression pumps throughout the health regions

- Development of lymphedema patient education resources and education initiatives for health professionals
- Expanded SAIL Compression Garment Policy to include full health coverage for day compression garments (4 per year), night garments (1 per every 2 years), compression bandaging supplies, specialized swell and scar pads, and garment accessories.

A very successful LAS Facebook Group was introduced, a Database was developed by the SIAST students for LAS and a banner was designed.

LAS became a Registered Charitable Organization.

LAS continued to provide education about lymphedema and its organization by attending public events such as the Prince Albert Street Fair and the Breast Cancer Symposium in Saskatoon.

An education day was combined with AGM in Saskatoon. The keynote speaker, Pam Fichtner (CDT Therapist) spoke on the Emotional Aspects of Lymphedema.

## 2013-2014

LAS started a quarterly newsletter to keep members informed of LAS news and events. Private CDT therapists were successfully included in the compression garments and bandaging requisitioner list on the SAIL Compression Garment Policy.

LAS hosted a National Lymphedema Awareness Day Education Event in Regina with John Mulligan from Lymphedema Depot

who provided information and training on specialized compression garments including night time garments and swell spots to lymphedema patients and health care professionals.

LAS hosted a two-day Lymphedema Symposium in Prince Albert with keynote speakers Dr. Anna Towers and Noreen Campbell.

## 2014-2015

Completion and distribution of the Lymphedema Working Group "Your Journey" Breast Cancer Resource for newly diagnosed breast cancer patients in Saskatchewan.

A patients survey was sent to all LAS members and placed on the web site to obtain statistical information to help maintain accurate information about the number of patients in SK who have been diagnosed with lymphedema, primary or secondary. This helps determine how many are receiving treatment, the kind of treatment and the provider. The information helps to assess the health system in regards to patient needs.

The membership reached an all-time high of 95 members, many as a result of 2 day symposium in Prince Albert.

Regina hosted a one-day Lymphedema Education Day with key-note speaker, Dr. Stanley Rockson from Stanford University, on new developments in lymphedema management and research.