

Lymphedema Training Standards - CLF Consensus Statement

The Canadian Lymphedema Framework (CLF) has adopted the following guidelines for Canada, with respect to training of therapists in lymphedema management using combined or complete decongestive therapy (CDT), also known as decongestive lymphatic therapy (DLT). The CLF recognizes that this is an evolving process and that changes are likely in the future.

1. Practitioners must have unrestricted licensure or ability to practice in a related medical field including but not limited to RN, PT, RMT, OT, MD.
2. The CLF adopts the guidelines of the National Lymphedema Network (NLN) and the Lymphology Association of North America (LANA) regarding the minimum requirements for CDT/DLT therapist training programs. A minimum of 135 hours of CDT/DLT training must be completed in a program that meets these guidelines.
3. Practitioners providing CDT should represent themselves accurately as having sufficient training as outlined by LANA, and have attended a program that teaches to the LANA standards. These standards are also supported by the National Lymphedema Network (NLN). The CLF recognizes that practitioners are qualified to practice CDT if they have successfully graduated from a school or program that adheres to the LANA standards.
4. Massage therapists and other therapists who have not attended an undergraduate university health care training program, will still be recommended by the CLF, if they can provide proof of a total of 12 college credits of human anatomy, physiology and pathology from an accredited college or university. Concurrent with the LANA requirements, this requirement is waived in provinces where massage therapy is regulated and meets the commonly accepted standard of 2200 hours.
5. *The CLF recognizes that massage therapists are not governed by a national body at this time in Canada and yet many are practicing competently as lymphedema therapists after having completed the required training.* Therefore all therapists who have completed a minimum of 135 hours of CDT training in a single program prior to 2017 and meet the condition in paragraph 1 will be “grandfathered” and accepted for recommendation by the CLF. We anticipate that by 2017 all massage therapists and other non-university educated therapists who graduate from a CDT program will meet the requirements as set out in paragraph 4.

Addendum

Within the mandate of the CLF mission: “The Canadian Lymphedema Framework (CLF) will work to improve the management of lymphedema and related disorders in Canada”, the subcommittee recognizes the following:

- a) The CLF is not an accrediting or credentialing organization.
- b) The CLF will recommend therapists who have met certain criteria, as outlined above, in order to enhance the care of patients with lymphedema.
- c) The CLF education subcommittee will take a proactive role in contacting massage colleges and therapists who do not meet the 2200 hour standard of training in massage therapy to initiate a dialogue on how CDT therapists can meet the CLF recommendation.
- d) The subcommittee recognizes the need to create mechanisms for
 - 1) Recognition of therapist training
 - 2) Therapist referral (e.g. website)
 - 3) Guidance of provincial organizations with regard to therapist training and referral

Acknowledgement

The CLF Board is pleased to announce that the document on training standards recommended by the CLF Education Working Group Standards Subcommittee was unanimously accepted by the CLF Board on October 27, 2013 as an official CLF Consensus Statement. The CLF Board commends this group for its work in helping to improve the standards of lymphedema care in Canada. Thanks to subcommittee members; Michel Eid, Robert Harris, Wendy Leroux, John Mulligan, Casi Shay and Dr. Anna Towers.

