

# Lymphatic Education & Research Network

[www.LymphaticNetwork.org](http://www.LymphaticNetwork.org)

## INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO FIGHT LYMPHATIC DISEASES & LYMPHEDEMA

Since 1998, LE&RN has been dedicated to fighting lymphedema and lymphatic disease. The World Health Organization estimates that over 150 million people worldwide have secondary lymphedema, while the NIH states that the incidence of primary lymphedema could be as high as 1 in 300 live births. Nearly 1.4 billion people in 73 countries are threatened by lymphatic filariasis, commonly known as elephantiasis. Over 120 million people are currently infected, with 40 million disfigured and incapacitated by the disease.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) warns that the incidence of secondary lymphedema among cancer survivors is 20–40%. Lymphedema is estimated to affect up to 10 million Americans. This is more than AIDS, Parkinson's disease, Muscular Dystrophy, Multiple Sclerosis and ALS—*combined*. The continuum of diseases impacted by the lymphatic system includes heart disease, AIDS, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis and cancer metastasis. Yet, lymphatic diseases routinely go undiagnosed and untreated, and research is grossly underfunded. Together, LE&RN and its worldwide members are determined to change this through education, research and advocacy.

### EDUCATION

- International Livestream Symposium Series for patients, researchers and medical professionals
- International Scholarship Awards for young research investigators in lymphatics
- Scholarships for lymphedema therapists
- Monthly educational newsletters and multimedia presentations
- Worldwide access to the field's leading authorities through *Ask the Experts* web feature

### RESEARCH

- International Research Fellowship Awards
- The LE&RN International Lymphatic Disease & Lymphedema Patient Registry & Tissue Bank
- *Lymphatic Research & Biology* (the world's only peer review lymphatic journal)
- NIH Collaboration & research funding initiatives

### ADVOCACY

- International and U.S. state chapters
- Celebrity spokesperson engagement
- Worldwide events to fight lymphedema and lymphatic diseases
- Political initiatives focused on research, education, and standard of care



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# TO WIN A FIGHT, YOU FIRST NEED TO JOIN IT



Academy Award-winning actress  
Kathy Bates with LE&RN Executive  
Director, William Repicci

*"I'm KATHY BATES. I had a double mastectomy two years ago and as a result I have lymphedema in both arms. If we want to win this fight against lymphedema and lymphatic disease, we need to stand together and educate the world. Join me. I urge you to become a member of LE&RN."*

## **We will never cure lymphedema and lymphatic disease if we stay invisible.**

We need to stand together and we need to have our friends and family in this fight as well. Lymphatic disease and lymphedema need to become an international priority. The days of suffering in silence are behind us.

**Join LE&RN in this fight. Visit us at: [LymphaticNetwork.org](http://LymphaticNetwork.org)**

### **What is Lymphatic Disease and Lymphedema?**

The lymphatic system is part of the immune system. It fulfills the function of "immune trafficking," the process whereby infection-fighting cells can be mobilized to the tissues that require assistance. When the lymphatic system is compromised by surgery, trauma, or improper development, the affected part of the body is prone to recurrent infection because of the faulty surveillance mechanism.

The most common lymphatic disease is **lymphedema**. Lymphedema is the accumulation of lymph fluid, typically in one part of the body. So, in breast cancer, for example, it can appear in the arm on the same side as the cancer, after lymph nodes are removed from the armpit region for cancer staging. Lymph is the protein-rich body fluid that accumulates when the lymphatic system for fluid transport is damaged.

Those who suffer from lymphatic diseases and lymphedema include children born with primary lymphedema and lymphatic malformations; cancer survivors and others physical trauma survivors such as war veterans who develop secondary lymphedema; and women with lipedema.

The impact of lymphatic diseases includes significant weight gain in affected limbs, loss of mobility, chronic infections, devastating quality of life changes, psychosocial trauma and can induce reduced life span or cause early mortality.



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