



# NLN Expert Clinician Designation

The National Lymphedema Network (“NLN”) aims to inspire clinicians to provide world-class care for people with lymphedema by promoting best practice guidelines and standards of care. To work towards this mission, the National Lymphedema Network established the *NLN Expert Clinician* (“EC”) designation in 2021 to elevate the standards of therapeutic care being provided to patients with lymphatic diseases by implementing a live competency-based testing on multiple facets of current lymphatic treatment. This includes, but is not limited to: manual lymph drainage; multi-layered short stretch bandaging; elastic taping; wound care; compression garment decision making, measuring and fitting; body region-specific considerations, such as head and neck, genital, and breast/chest; pneumatic compression pump use and fibrosis treatments. There will also be a written examination for the *NLN EC* designation to assess that the clinician possesses functional knowledge related to safety with patient care and best current treatment practice. This will include though not limited to: anatomy and physiology of the lymphatic system; current surgical procedures for lymphatic conditions; contraindications and precautions related to therapeutic interventions, such as manual lymph drainage and compression; skin care and potential physical changes; and modalities.

All testing will be administered immediately prior to the annual NLN conference. The NLN begins accepting new applications five months prior to the conference, and closes approximately 30 days prior to the start date for the conference.

## New Applicants

The process outlined below is for clinicians who would like to sit for the *NLN Expert Clinician* designation testing.

1. Apply for consideration to participate in the *NLN EC* designation testing.
  - The application is complimentary to active NLN members and is \$75 for non-members, which is non-refundable and non-transferrable.
  - The application process opens five months prior to the conference for that year, and closes 30 days prior to the start date for the conference.
  - The application can be found on the NLN membership website: [nlnmembership.com](http://nlnmembership.com).
  - Each application is reviewed by the *NLN EC* team to determine if the applicant meets all the requirements and is eligible for testing. The applicant is then notified within 30 days of approval or denial.

- Requirements to be considered for testing:
  - Clinician must have a professional license that is current and in good-standing, including MD, DO, RN, NP, PA, PT, PTA, OT, COTA, LMT
  - Clinician is a certified lymphedema therapist certification from a school that requires a minimum of 135 hours of Complete Decongestive Therapy coursework, with at least two-thirds of training hours, minimum of 90 hours, includes practical, hands-on, face-to-face laboratory instruction. Please refer to [NLN's Position Paper on Training](#).
  - A minimum of five years experience treating lymphedema and other lymphatic diseases
  - Clinicians must be currently practicing lymphedema therapy for least 75% of the their patient caseload with lymphatic disease, including use of CDT (manual lymph drainage, multi-layered short stretch bandaging, therapeutic exercise, compression garment decision making and fitting, and education on meticulous skin care as well as self-care regimen), body-specific considerations, such as head and neck, genital, and breast/chest, as well as pneumatic compression pump use and fibrosis), elastic taping, and wound care depending on the individual needs of each patient.
  - Provide three letters of recommendation: one from your supervisor and two from colleagues who are also clinicians
    - For clinicians in private practice, a personal statement attesting to the above practices will replace the Supervisor Statement of Recommendation
  - Has successfully provided all necessary documentation to support the above requirements in their application
- In the event that the application has been denied, you will receive written notification, and be given the opportunity to complete the application process again. The time frame will depend on the reason the application was not accepted.
  - Reasons an applicant may be denied include, but are not limited to:
    - Incomplete application
    - Missing documentation
    - Clinician does not meet all criteria
- Priority will be given to applications received before the deadline. Applications received after the deadline may not be processed in time for this year, however all efforts will be made to include them.

## 2. Complete written examination.

- The written examination for the *NLN EC* designation is to assess that the clinician possesses functional knowledge related to safety with patient care and best current treatment practices. This will include though is not limited to: anatomy and physiology of the lymphatic system, current surgical procedures for lymphatic disease, contraindications and precautions related to therapeutic interventions, such

as manual lymph drainage and compression, skin care and potential physical changes, and modalities.

- The exam is a multiple-choice format of 50 questions.
- The exam will be given on the same day as the live competency testing for the *NLN EC* designation.
- A passing score of 80% or higher is required.

3. Participate in live, in-person one-on-one testing with competency format.

- Live competency format includes a minimum of 6 hours on the same day to complete each portion of the testing with an instructor. Pre-requisite webinars may be included prior to the date of testing.
- Each portion of the competency will require the instructor to verify successful completion of the objectives for that topic. In the event that even one of the portions of the testing is unable to be completed by the candidate or did not pass the testing, then that clinician will be ineligible to receive the *NLN EC* designation, and will have the opportunity to reapply for a future testing.
- Topics include, but are not limited to: manual lymph drainage; multi-layered short stretch bandaging; elastic taping; wound care; compression garment decision making and fitting; body-specific considerations, such as head and neck, genital, and breast/chest; pneumatic compression pump use; and treatment for fibrosis.
- Each section of the manual skills assessment will require physical demonstration of the manual techniques. The NLN will do our best to accommodate any reasonable requests for any clinicians who require special arrangements.
- A fee of \$475 is required for the live testing. The registration can be found on the NLN membership website: [nlnmembership.com](http://nlnmembership.com).

Upon successful completion of all necessary requirements, the *NLN Expert Clinician* designation will be awarded to each candidate. Clinicians will also be allowed to use the *NLN EC* designation under their name. Please see example below:

First Name Last Name, Credentials

National Lymphedema Network Expert Clinician

Clinicians who would like to use the *NLN EC* logo for marketing purposes must submit an application for approval. This application can be found on the NLN membership website: [nlnmembership.com](http://nlnmembership.com). Please refer to the requirements for approval below.

*NLN Expert Clinicians* will be announced at the end of the annual NLN conference, and will be awarded the certificate and medallion at that time; and will be asked to sign the *NLN EC* oath.

As an *NLN EC*, each clinician will have the opportunity to have their professional photo and a short bio on the NLN website. This information will stay on the website for as long as a clinician remains certified by meeting all of the criteria.

The *NLN Expert Clinician* designation is continuously valid from the year of successful testing contingent upon meeting the criteria listed below.

## **Requirements for Maintaining Certification**

Once the designation has been rewarded, the process for maintaining the certification are as follows:

1. The process needs to be completed on or before December 31 of each year.
2. The form can be found on the NLN membership website: [nlnmembership.com](http://nlnmembership.com).
- 3.. The application is complimentary to active NLN members and is \$75 for non-members, which is non-refundable and non-transferrable.
4. Submit the appropriate supporting documentation, which includes:
  - Evidence of current licensure in good-standing. This applies to all clinicians (MD, DO, RN, NP, PA, PT, PTA, OT, COTA, MT)
  - Supervisor Statement of Recommendation confirming the clinician is currently practicing lymphedema therapy for least 75% of the their patient caseload with lymphatic disease, including use of CDT (manual lymph drainage, multi-layered short stretch bandaging, therapeutic exercise, compression garment decision making and fitting, and education on meticulous skin care as well as self-care regimen), body-specific considerations, such as head and neck, genital, and breast/chest, as well as pneumatic compression pump use and fibrosis), elastic taping, and wound care depending on the individual needs of each patient.
    - For clinicians in private practice, a personal statement attesting to the above practices will replace the Supervisor Statement of Recommendation
  - A letter of attendance or a Continuing Education Certificate demonstrating a minimum of 8 contact hours completed in a live, hands-on, manual skills training that may or may not be directly related to lymphatic therapy, however enhances patient care.
  - A letter of attendance or a Continuing Education Certificate demonstrating a minimum of 8 contact hours of didactic learning, which may be live or web based, with the content being directly related to lymphology.
  - Updated short bio - optional
  - Updated professional headshot - optional
  - Updated CV - only necessary if a change has occurred within the prior year

In the event that the documentation was not received by the NLN by December 31 of that year, the clinician must immediately discontinue the use of the *NLN EC* designation. Please refer to the Inactive Status information below.

## Inactive Status

Clinicians who allow their *NLN EC* designation to lapse, will be required to complete the following processes below depending on the length of time past the December 31 deadline. Clinicians will no longer be allowed to use the *NLN EC* designation, and their professional information will be removed from the *NLN EC* page on the NLN website and other relevant materials.

- Clinicians who have an inactive *NLN EC* designation status less than or equal to one year from deadline, will need to complete the following:
  - Contact the Continuing Education Officer directly to provide an update.
  - Complete the aforementioned process for maintaining certification with the additional associated fees of \$25 for each month past the deadline
    - This applies to active NLN members and non-members
- Clinicians whose *NLN EC* designation has lapsed for more than one year will be required to:
  - complete the new applicant process, and pay all associated non-transferable and non-refundable fees
  - return the certificate and medallion at the clinician's expense to:
    - National Lymphedema Network
    - PO Box 1008
    - New York, New York 10276

## Use of *NLN Expert Clinician Medallion Logo*

Clinicians who would like to use the *NLN EC* logo for marketing purposes must submit an application for approval. The application can be found on the NLN membership website: [nlnmembership.com](http://nlnmembership.com). When an application is approved, the clinician will receive written notice, as well as a copy of the file.

Use of the *NLN EC* medallion logo requires agreement to the following:

- The medallion file will be used professionally and only related to marketing directly associated to the *NLN Expert Clinician's* name and no other clinician.
- Each *NLN EC* clinician needs to submit their individual requests.
- If found to be using the file inappropriately, the privileges to use the logo will be revoked, and the clinician will no longer be allowed to use the logo in any personal or commercial capacity.
- The clinician may only use the logo while the *NLN EC* status is current and in good-standing. If the *NLN EC* designation receives an inactive status, the clinician can no longer use the logo until all necessary requirements have been fulfilled. The clinician will then have to complete a new application to use the medallion logo file.



# NLN Expert Clinician Designation

## *Application Checklist*

### **New Applicants:**

Before you apply for the NLN Expert Clinician testing, please have the following items available:

- Current practitioner license number
- URL link for license verification
- Name of school where the certified lymphedema therapist certification was received
- Resume / CV, highlighting a minimum of five years experience treating lymphedema and other lymphatic diseases
- Three statements of recommendation: one from your supervisor, and two from clinician colleagues ; \*clinicians in private practice, please submit a personal statement (please refer to forms below)

### **In-Person Manual Skills NLN Expert Clinician Testing:**

Before you register for the NLN Expert Clinician testing, please have the following items available:

- Approval Code (included in the email with your application approval)
- Professional Headshot (see example [here](#))
- Short Professional Bio (see example [here](#))

### **New Applicants:**

Before you submit the documentation for the NLN Expert Clinician renewal, please have the following items available:

- Expert Clinician Number (found on the NLN EC certificate)
- Current practitioner license number
- URL link for license verification
- Supervisor Statement of Recommendation / Personal Statement\*
- Documentation demonstrating a minimum of 8 contact hours completed in a live, hands-on, manual skills training
- Documentation demonstrating a minimum of 8 contact hours of didactic learning
- Updated CV / resume - only if a change has occurred within the prior year
- Updated Professional Headshot - optional (see example [here](#))
- Updated Short Professional Bio - optional (see example [here](#))