



# Advocacy in ACTION

Fighting for People with Arthritis



## Advocacy in Action

February 10, 2015

Volume 2, Issue 3

### Arthritis Today Launches Revised Drug Resource Guides

Three newly revised guides about financial support for prescription drugs and special arthritis medications are now on the Arthritis Foundation's website.

Access to medications that can improve life for people with arthritis – offering pain relief, symptom management or both – is crucial, but out-of-pocket costs burden individual and family budgets. The higher cost can make these drugs unavailable and cause difficult decisions about treatment.

Arthritis Foundation staff partnered with drug companies to make this information up-to-date and applicable to you. They created this information with the hope of making vital drugs more accessible to people of all ages living with arthritis.

The guides and a brief summary are listed below:

- [Pharmaceutical Company Programs That Help Lower the Cost of Medication](#) – focused on co-pay support and financial assistance for specific arthritis medications
- [Get Help Paying for Medicare and Prescriptions](#) – focused on private and public programs related to Medicare Part D coverage and Medicare prescriptions
- [Financial Aid Organizations That Help Pay for Your Medications](#) – focused on private groups that offer financial support for arthritis medications and other prescription drugs taken by people with

arthritis.

[View the resource guides here](#), and share them with those who could benefit from the information.

### **Arthritis Foundation testifies in Georgia**

On January 28, Mark Guimond, the Arthritis Foundation's Director of State Legislative Affairs, spoke about biosimilar legislation before the Georgia legislature's Joint House and Senate Health & Human Services Committee. The testimony focused on the benefits that biologic medications have brought to people with arthritis and the cost of the medicines. "The issue of affordability is not just out-of-pocket what [people with arthritis] are likely to save, it also involves medical adherence. If someone can afford their medications, they will stay on them," Guimond said.

Guimond was joined by Arthritis Foundation Ambassador Kerry Tucker, who testified about her personal story of living with arthritis and her \$1,300 monthly medication expense. "I want patients who cannot afford this option to find hope and relief with biosimilars," Tucker said.

The hearing can be found on the Georgia legislature's [LiveStream](#). (Guimond's testimony begins at 37:15; Tucker's testimony begins at 44:05.)

### **The Arthritis Foundation Leads Letter on Key Patient Affordability Issue**

The Arthritis Foundation spearheaded a [sign-on letter](#) this week to the House of Representatives regarding inclusion of the Patients' Access to Treatments Act (PATA) in their landmark research legislation. Thirty national patient groups signed the letter, noting that scientific discovery and development are meaningless if patients can't afford treatments. The House Energy and Commerce Committee worked for the last year on sweeping legislation to improve the way treatments are discovered, developed and delivered to market. PATA would limit patient cost-sharing in the highest cost insurance tiers, which would make costly drugs much more affordable for people with arthritis.

### **President Obama Releases His 2016 Budget, Restores Vital Arthritis Program**

President Obama released his budget for fiscal year 2016 last week. The budget would restore the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Arthritis Program to its full funding of \$13 million, which the Arthritis Foundation supports. The program was put on the chopping block in the 2015

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funding bill, and though we succeeded in saving the program, the funding was cut by \$3.5 million. Our goal is to restore that funding in 2016. The Arthritis Program operates in 12 states, helping connect people with arthritis with resources to help them manage their disease.

*This is a publication from the Arthritis Foundation Advocacy and Access Department.*

*For questions, please contact us at [advocacy@arthritis.org](mailto:advocacy@arthritis.org).*

