Arthritis Prevalence: A Nation in Pain

Arthritis is a term used to describe more than 100 different conditions that affect joints as well as other parts of the body. Arthritis is one of the most prevalent chronic health problems and the nation’s number one cause of disability.

The Arthritis Foundation is the only not-for-profit volunteer organization representing more than 50 million people in the United States with arthritis. The Arthritis Foundation supports research, health education and government advocacy efforts to improve the lives of people with arthritis.

### Spotlight on CDC Arthritis Program

- The CDC Arthritis Program is the only federal program dedicated specifically to arthritis.
- The goal of the program is to reach all people living with arthritis.
- It works with state health departments and organizations to disseminate evidence-based programs to people with arthritis, perform public health research, and provide education services to help people with arthritis learn ways to manage the disease.
- The Arthritis Program currently has grants in 12 states, and is funded at $13 million, which is also the amount requested in the FY 2015 President’s Budget.
- Without this funding, CDC would not be able to provide program resources to people with arthritis, nor would it be able to continue surveillance of arthritis, which tracks the prevalence and severity of the disease.

### Arthritis Affects More People Than You Think

- An estimated 52.5 million adults in the United States reported being told by a doctor that they have some form of arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, lupus, or fibromyalgia.
- Nearly 80 percent of adults either have or know someone with arthritis.
- Arthritis is one of the most commonly reported chronic diseases, and nearly half of people with arthritis have at least one other chronic condition.
More than half of adults with diabetes (52 percent) or heart disease (57 percent) and one-third of obese adults also have arthritis.iv

Two-thirds of the people that have doctor-diagnosed arthritis are under the age of 65", and 300,000 of all people affected are children.vi

One in five (22%) adults in the United States report having doctor-diagnosed arthritis.vii

By 2030, an estimated 67 million of Americans aged 18 years or older are projected to have doctor-diagnosed arthritis.viii

The prevalence of arthritis is higher among women (24.3%) than men (18.7%).ix

59 million people report having low back pain, and 30 million people report having neck pain.x

**Arthritis is a Costly Disease**

Arthritis and rheumatic conditions cost the U.S. economy $128 billion, nearly $81 billion in direct medical costs and $47 billion in lost earnings.xi

80% of all health care spending is for people with one or more chronic conditions like arthritis.xii

Arthritis annually results in:
- 36 million ambulatory care visitsxiii
- 744,000 hospitalizations
- 9,367 deaths
- 22.7 million people with activity limitationsxiv

Arthritis causes work limitations in the United States for 31% of people diagnosed with arthritis.xv

Arthritis-caused work limitations are as high as 12.7% of the entire working age population in some states, with up to 1 out of every 2 people with arthritis experiencing work limitations.xvi

Arthritis-caused activity limitations are worse for racial and ethnic minority groups, affecting 47% of non-Hispanic blacks and 44.8% of Hispanics with arthritis, compared with 39.3% of whites.xvii

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3 CDC Arthritis: Meeting the Challenge of Living Well, At A Glance 2013.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 CDC Arthritis: Meeting the Challenge of Living Well, At A Glance 2013.


Arthritis & Rheumatism 2006;54(1):226-229 [Data Source: 2003 NHIS].

CDC Arthritis: Meeting the Challenge of Living Well, At A Glance 2013.


CDC MMRW. National and State Medical Expenditures and Lost Earnings Attributable to Arthritis and Other Rheumatic Conditions. 56(01):4-7. 2007.


CDC, National Health Interview Survey, United States, 2010-2012.