

ARTHRITIS
FOUNDATION



2015 LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Colleague,

As the 114th Congress begins, we're writing to invite you to become a member of the bi-partisan Congressional Arthritis Caucus.

With nearly 100 bipartisan, bicameral Members, the Arthritis Caucus works to heighten awareness about the effects of this debilitating disease on children and adults, as well as the impacts it has on our economy.

Here are three important statistics:

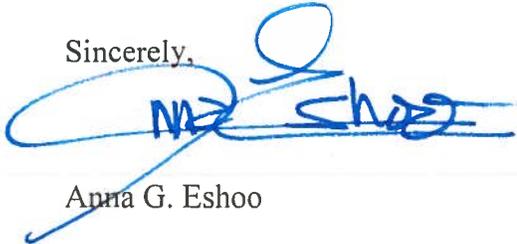
- Arthritis is the most common cause of disability in the United States.
- 46 million Americans battle some form of arthritis every day, including 300,000 children.
- According to the arthritis foundation, the cost of arthritis to the U.S. economy in 2003 totaled \$128 billion, including \$81 billion in the direct medical costs and \$47 billion in the indirect costs lost earnings.

Arthritis is a painful and physically debilitating chronic disease which will affect 67 million people, or 25% of the population. Arthritis results in almost 1 million hospitalizations and 44 million outpatient visits. It is also the number one diagnosis for hip and knee replacement, one of the fastest growing Medicare procedures.

The mission of the Congressional Arthritis Caucus is to serve as a clearinghouse for information on arthritis and a bipartisan forum to aid Members and their staffs in working together to address arthritis.

We want to welcome you to the Arthritis Caucus. If you'd like more information or your Member would like to join, please contact Erin Katzelnick-Wise (Erin.Katzelnick-Wise@mail.house.gov) with Rep. Eshoo's staff or Devon Seibert (Devon.Seibert@mail.house.gov) with Rep. McKinley's staff.

Sincerely,



Anna G. Eshoo



David McKinley



Why Join the Congressional Arthritis Caucus?

- **Because arthritis is our nation's leading cause of disability**, resulting in an annual \$128 billion price tag from direct (medical) and indirect (lost earnings) costs.
- **Because over 52 million Americans have arthritis** now, and that number is expected to climb to 67 million within 20 years.
- **Because, according to the CDC, 1 in 20 working age adults have to change jobs**, stop working entirely, or reduce the hours they work due to arthritis.
- **Because arthritis pain is a barrier to the treatment of other chronic diseases.** 52% of adults with diabetes, 57% of people with heart disease, and one third of obese adults also have arthritis.
- **Because the impact of arthritis is worse on racial and ethnic minority groups.** 47% of Non-Hispanic Blacks and 44.8% of Hispanics with arthritis report activity limitations.
- **Because together we can fight to end arthritis.**

The mission of the Bicameral Congressional Arthritis Caucus, co-chaired by Representatives McKinley (R-WV) and Eshoo (D-CA), is to serve as a clearinghouse for information on arthritis and a bipartisan forum to aid Members of Congress in working together to address arthritis. The Caucus strives to raise awareness about arthritis and work toward the goal of educating all Members about how arthritis impacts their communities and how to help support federal and local efforts addressing arthritis in all its forms. For more information about this group or to join, please contact Representative McKinley staffer Devon Seibert at devon.seibert@mail.house.gov or Representative Eshoo staffer Erin Katzelnick-Wise at erin.katzelnick-wise@mail.house.gov.

Learn about the impact of arthritis on your state by visiting http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/data_statistics.htm



January 2015

2015 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

CALL TO ACTION: REDUCE OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS FOR VITAL ARTHRITIS MEDICATIONS

Medications are a normal part of life for many who have arthritis, so the affordability of these drugs is essential. In the past, health insurers have set co-pays for different drug categories, or tiers, of medications (for example, \$10/\$20/\$50 for three tiers). Some health insurance policies are now moving vital medications (mostly biologics) into a fourth (or higher) specialty tier. Doing so can require people with arthritis and other conditions to pay anywhere from 25% to 50% of their drug cost instead of a predictable, fixed co-payment.

This change limits access to the medications that individuals with chronic, disabling diseases like rheumatoid arthritis depend on to manage their symptoms and prevent further joint damage, which will likely lead to negative health outcomes and additional costs to the healthcare system.

WHAT CAN CONGRESS DO?

Support and pass the Patients' Access to Treatment Act to limit the medication cost-sharing requirements for people with arthritis.

CALL TO ACTION: SUPPORT OUR MILITARY THROUGH INCREASED RESEARCH FOR ARTHRITIS

Osteoarthritis is one of the leading causes of disability among military personnel. In fact, the prevalence rate for veterans and service members over the age of 40 is twice as high as the general population. Also, one of every four veterans has received an official arthritis diagnosis from a doctor, compared to one in five people in the civilian population.

The Department of Defense (DoD) funds a Peer-Reviewed Medical Research Program that covers post-traumatic osteoarthritis, osteoarthritis, arthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis. This program provides great opportunities for advancing critical arthritis research, particularly focused on the needs of service members that will benefit all people with arthritis. However, unlike many other diseases and conditions funded by DoD, funding for arthritis research is not guaranteed.

WHAT CONGRESS CAN DO:

Create a separate line item of \$20 million dollars for arthritis-related research, which would guarantee a dedicated funding stream to address one of the most pervasive health issues among our military personnel.



About the Arthritis Foundation

WHAT WE DO

The Arthritis Foundation (www.arthritis.org) is the largest and most trusted nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the needs and challenges of those living with arthritis, the nation's leading cause of disability. Since 1948, the Foundation has remained committed to leading groundbreaking research for better treatments and a cure; fighting for patients' access to affordable and effective health care; and providing trusted information and resources to the more than 50 million adults and 300,000 children living with the disease.

Our goal is to chart a winning course, guiding families in developing personalized plans for living a full life – and making each day another stride towards a cure.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the Arthritis Foundation Department of Advocacy and Access

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