

ARTHRITIS  
FOUNDATION  
ADVOCACY



## GUIDE FOR ACTION

PREPARING FOR A MEMBER OF  
CONGRESS TO ATTEND YOUR  
JINGLE BELL RUN



## YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS SAID YES

Great news! An elected official has agreed to attend your Jingle Bell Run. When a Member of Congress shows up, everyone wins:

- **Your JBR** receives publicity and is positioned as an important community event.
- **Arthritis Foundation advocacy staff and volunteers** strengthen their ongoing relationship with the member of Congress. Building allies on Capitol Hill allows us to increase research funding and improve access to care for people with arthritis.
- **The elected official** has the opportunity to address an audience of his/her constituents in a positive atmosphere.

To prepare for the arrival of an elected official you will need to identify and locate the following items:

- **A handler.** Ideally, a local Arthritis Ambassador or mission staff person.
- **A photographer.** No need to pay a professional, but a volunteer who is willing to snap a few photos of the official speaking, interacting with runners, and meeting with volunteers is helpful.
- **Time.** The official will want to address the audience. Be prepared to be flexible the day of the event to accommodate the official's schedule and ensure that they have an opportunity to speak.
- **A thank you card.** Place the thank you card either in the mission booth or at registration and have participants sign. If you have a large event, you may consider a jumbo card, which can be delivered to the local congressional office after the event or mailed to the Arthritis Foundation's Washington, DC office for hand-delivery to Capitol Hill.
- **A Faces of Arthritis T-Shirt.** Offer this to your Member of Congress to wear during the event and to keep as a gift.
- Finally, **read** through this document to ensure that you're prepared and know what to expect.

### DO'S & DON'TS Of interacting with a legislator

#### Do

Greet them with their official title (e.g. Representative Blackburn).

Give them space and time to interact with attendees in an informal manner.

Give them time to speak and provide their staff with the included talking points if they are requested.

#### Don't

Share with them any frustrations you're having with event planners or volunteers.

Give them a gift valued over \$5.

Talk politics. Arthritis knows no political party and we are a nonpartisan organization.

Worry! Members of Congress are generally polite and make a point to be sociable and approachable.



# HANDLER GUIDE

As the legislator's handler, you'll want to take the following steps:

- Connect with the local legislative office prior to the event. Make sure you know when to expect the Member's arrival. Arrange an onsite meeting location. Share with your Member relevant state-specific arthritis data.
- Google the Member! You want to know who you're looking for! When you meet them, offer a bottle of water.
- Ask your Regional Advocacy Workgroup member if your legislator is a member of the Arthritis Caucus or a cosponsor of any important arthritis-related legislation. Be sure to thank him/her support of people with arthritis.
- Determine which staff and volunteers you want to introduce the Member to prior to the event. Make sure that those being introduced are aware that the legislator is attending the event and that they know how to address them properly: Representative [Last Name]. Typically, this list includes honorees, the run coordinator, local/regional CEOs and any prominent advocacy volunteers.
- After your introductions, give the Member time to interact with other event participants. Keep an eye on them, without hovering.
- Usher the Member to the stage when it is their turn to speak. Greet them after completing their speech and thank them for their time. Typically, at this point, the legislator will depart.

If you have any questions, contact your Regional Advocacy Workgroup Member or Laurie Markle at [lmarkle@arthritis.org](mailto:lmarkle@arthritis.org) or (202) 887-2921

## Regional Advocacy Contacts:

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## MEMBER TALKING POINTS

Arthritis impacts over 50 million Americans and 300,000 of our nation's children.

Over XXXX of people living in [State] are living with arthritis.

Arthritis is our nation's leading cause of disability, costing our economy a whopping \$128 billion each year.

We can't afford to ignore arthritis.

That's why I'm doing my part by:

- Joining the Congressional Arthritis Caucus. I am pleased to serve on the bicameral Congressional Arthritis Caucus and work with over seventy (70) of my colleagues to raise awareness about arthritis, and these important legislative issues, on Capitol Hill.
- Cosponsoring the *Patients' Access to Treatments Act (HR 460)*. Some commercial health insurance policies are now moving vital medication, like biologics, into "specialty tiers" that utilize high patient cost-sharing methods. This commonly requires patients to pay a percentage of the actual cost of these drugs – from 25% to 50%, often costing hundreds of dollars, even thousands of dollars, per month for a single medication – rather than a fixed, flat dollar co-payment. These practices are placing medically necessary treatments out of reach of average Americans. If enacted, the *Patients' Access to Treatments Act (HR 460)* will limit cost-sharing requirements in the specialty drug tier to a similar dollar amount applicable to drugs in a non-preferred brand drug tier, making critical medications more accessible to those who need them most.
- Cosponsoring the *Pediatric Subspecialty and Workforce Reauthorization Act (HR 1827)*. The *Pediatric Subspecialty and Mental Health Workforce Reauthorization Act (HR 1827)*, will keep in place the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program. This program seeks to incentivize the field of pediatric rheumatology by offering modest student loan repayments for new practitioners willing to serve in areas with a critical shortage. Currently, there are eleven (11) states without a single, board-certified, practicing pediatric rheumatologist. This program needs to be both reauthorized and adequately funded in order to be successful at addressing the needs of America's 300,000 children living with Juvenile Arthritis.
- Supporting arthritis research at the National Institutes of Health and the Department of Defense.

Thanks for being here and doing your part, too.

By participating in the Arthritis Foundation's Jingle Bell Run, you've raised critical dollars for a cure. The Arthritis Foundation is the largest national nonprofit organization that supports the more than 100 types of arthritis and related conditions. They've contributed over \$450 million to arthritis research making them the world's largest nonprofit contributor to an arthritis cure.

I thank you for the chance to join you in the fight to find a cure.