

Issue Brief: Congress Must Increase Funding for CDC's Arthritis Program

The Facts about Arthritis

Arthritis affects over 50 million Americans (1 in 5), including 300,000 children, striking people of all ages, races and ethnicities. Its impact on the economy is more than \$128 billion, including over \$81 billion in direct costs for expenses such as physician visits and surgical interventions. By 2030, an estimated 25% of the adult population will have doctor-diagnosed arthritis.

The Arthritis Program at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

The Arthritis Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently receives \$13 million. Current funding supports competitively bid grants for key stakeholders, including 12 state health departments, the Arthritis Foundation, and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD). Grants support intervention based services and (1) increase awareness about appropriate arthritis self-management activities, (2) expand the reach of programs proven to improve the quality of life for people with arthritis and (3) decrease the overall burden of arthritis as well as its associated disability, work and activity limitations.

Proposals Threaten the Future of the CDC Arthritis Program

Congress has considered several proposals in the President's budget to combine existing chronic disease programs (including those for diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, stroke and cancer) into a single consolidated State Block Grant program. The chronic disease community, including the Arthritis Foundation, continues to express serious concerns about proposals to consolidate chronic disease programs at the CDC, including but not limited to the lack of resources for some of the disease specific programs.

Request

Considering the rising burden of arthritis and other chronic diseases, along with the mounting fiscal pressures, the Arthritis Foundation recommends that Congress:

- **Continue funding for the CDC Arthritis Program (\$15M FY2014)**
The AF supports expanding the CDC Arthritis Program to all 50 states when funding becomes available. In order to improve the quality of life for individuals with arthritis, fund the Arthritis Program at \$15M so that the Program can continue its work and fund an additional 2 states.
- **Oppose efforts to consolidate chronic disease programs at the CDC**
A consolidated chronic disease program would undermine effective work in disease-specific evidence based prevention programs.

