

Issue Brief



Prevent Arthritis: Invest Today in CDC Initiative

The medical and societal impact of arthritis in the U.S. is staggering.

- Arthritis costs **\$128 billion**, which was equivalent to 1.2% of the U.S. gross domestic product in 2003. These costs include \$81 billion in direct costs for expenses like physician visits and surgical interventions and \$47 billion in indirect costs for missed work days.
- Arthritis is the most common cause of disability in the United States.
- **46 million people** (1 in 5 adults) and **294,000 children** live with arthritis every day.
- By the year 2030, an estimated **67 million or 25%** of the projected total adult population will have arthritis.
- Nearly one-third of adults with arthritis experience work limitations.
- More than 57% of adults with heart disease and more than 52% of adults with diabetes also have arthritis. Arthritis limits the ability of people to effectively manage other chronic diseases.
- Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention receive \$13 million for its arthritis program with about half of that amount distributed, via competitive grant, to 36 state health departments.

To help address the devastating burden of arthritis, the Arthritis Foundation urges Congress to appropriate \$23 million for the arthritis program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This amounts to 50 cents per person with arthritis.

Background:

- ✓ Research shows that the pain and disability of arthritis *can* be decreased through early diagnosis and appropriate management, including evidence based self-management activities such as weight control and physical activity.
- ✓ The Arthritis Foundation Self-Help Program, a group education program has been proven to reduce arthritis pain by 20% and physician visits by 40%.
- ✓ Over the past five years, 36 state health departments have successfully used CDC funding to increase public awareness of the burden of arthritis and increase the availability of interventions that have been proven to improve the quality of life and health care of people with arthritis.
- ✓ These interventions are recognized by the CDC to reduce health care expenditures.
- ✓ A CDC convened expert panel has recommended that states receive larger grants to be more effective.
- ✓ **Without increased funding, approximately 20 states will lose CDC support for their arthritis programs.**

Congressional Request: The Arthritis Foundation urges Congress to make a critical investment of \$23 million (\$10 million over FY '08) in CDC's arthritis program. The CDC arthritis program implements proven strategies that can help reduce the arthritis burden and reach more people with arthritis in as many states as possible in Fiscal Year 2009.