



News Release – For Immediate Release  
Contact: Tammy Sander – Media Coordinator  
(317) 879-0321 ext. 207 (work)  
(317) 517-9519 (cell)  
[tsander@arthritis.org](mailto:tsander@arthritis.org)

## **Arthritis Foundation Addresses Critical Shortage of Pediatric Rheumatologists**

Indiana Chapter to Fund Fellowship at Riley Hospital for Children

Indianapolis (September 8, 2008) – An announcement this weekend will unveil a plan to help solve an urgent, but nearly unknown Indiana healthcare crisis.

The Arthritis Foundation, Indiana Chapter is launching a three-year fellowship at Riley Hospital for Children to train more board-certified pediatric rheumatologists. There are currently only THREE such doctors in our state and more than 6,400 kids with arthritis.

“We’re treating less than a third of Indiana’s children with arthritis,” states Dr. Suzanne Bowyer, the director of the Section of Pediatric Rheumatology at Riley Hospital for Children. “These kids aren’t being seen by qualified pediatric specialists because it’s too far a drive or worse yet because they think there’s nothing that can be done for it. The truth is that early diagnosis can make the difference between walking and a wheelchair for many of these kids.”

The fellow will do two years of research in juvenile arthritis – something that isn’t currently being done at Riley because the doctors are so busy with patient care. The fellow will also allow doctors at Riley Hospital to open more clinics in remote parts of Indiana so families don’t have to give up a day of school and work to travel to Indianapolis for treatment.

**The Indiana Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation will host a news conference at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 14th in the main atrium of Riley Hospital, but will make patients, their doctors and the fellow available for media interviews from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.**

“This is an investment in our children,” says Kevin Mandrell, chairman of the Arthritis Foundation board of directors. “Kids are not just little adults. They deserve the best care available. The more doctors we train, the earlier these kids get diagnosed and the less likely they are to spend the rest of their lives in a wheelchair.”

Arthritis is the nation’s number one cause of disability. Nearly 1.4 million Hoosiers live with this sometimes debilitating disease. There is currently no known cure.

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*The Arthritis Foundation is the only nationwide, not-for-profit health organization working to prevent, control and cure arthritis and related disease – the nation’s number one cause of disability. The Indiana Chapter has branches in Indianapolis, South Bend, Evansville and Ft. Wayne.*