

Contact: Joyce Harvey
Arthritis Foundation
Phone: 404-786-1616
Email: JHarvey@arthritis.org

Cori McKeever
Chandler Chicco Agency
Phone: 202-609-6004
Email: cmckeever@ccapr.com

**ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES “LET’S TALK RA” CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE
COMMUNICATION BETWEEN RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS
PATIENTS & THEIR DOCTORS**

**-- Campaign Designed to Help the Nearly 70 Percent of People Being Treated for RA Who Still
Experience RA Symptoms --**

(ATLANTA, September 13, 2006) – The Arthritis Foundation announces the launch of “Let’s Talk RA,” a national education and awareness campaign designed to improve communication between people who live with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and their rheumatologists. The campaign includes a free communication guide for those with RA as well as town hall meetings held across the U.S. that will be led by experts from the Arthritis Foundation including CEO, John H. Klippel, M.D. Let’s Talk RA also will be supported with an educational radio, television and print campaign.

The Let’s Talk RA campaign, sponsored by Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, will address the importance of improved physician-patient communication. A survey conducted on behalf of the Arthritis Foundation found that nearly 70 percent of people being treated for RA still experience stiffness, fatigue or pain on a daily basis. In addition, unlike many other diseases, there is no one specific diagnostic test for rheumatoid arthritis, so clearly describing symptoms to a physician is important for proper care.

“Rheumatologists need to have a clear understanding of exactly how rheumatoid arthritis is affecting an individual’s daily activities in order to receive the best possible care. The key to this understanding is effective communication,” said John H. Klippel, M.D., president and CEO of the Arthritis Foundation. Dr. Klippel also is a rheumatologist. “Let’s Talk RA provides people living with rheumatoid arthritis with tools designed to facilitate effective and specific communication about their condition with their doctors.”

Let’s Talk RA Communication Guide

The Let’s Talk RA communication guide was designed by the Arthritis Foundation with input from rheumatologists to help those with RA prepare for each doctor visit. The guide offers practical tips, including what to take notes on and types of questions to ask the doctor. Tips to facilitate the

dialogue on treatment plan options and modifiable lifestyle changes such as diet and exercise also are included. The free communication guide is available from the Arthritis Foundation's Web site, <http://www.arthritis.org> or by calling 1-800-568-4045.

Let's Talk RA Town Hall Meetings

A series of 10 town hall meetings will take place across the United States beginning in March 2007 for people living with RA and their caregivers. Speakers will discuss the importance of communicating effectively with rheumatologists, disease management and making better lifestyle choices. Attendees will have a rare and valuable opportunity to get immediate answers to their questions from Arthritis Foundation medical experts including Dr. Klippel and other community rheumatologists during the Q&A portion of the meeting.

About Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a systemic, chronic, autoimmune disease characterized by inflammation in the lining of the joints (or *synovium*), causing joint damage with chronic pain, stiffness and swelling. RA causes limited range of motion and decreased function as a result of affected joints losing their shape and alignment.

RA affects more than 2 million people in the United States and is more common in women, who account for 75 percent of patients diagnosed with RA.

About the Arthritis Foundation

The Arthritis Foundation is the nation's leading health organization addressing the needs of some 43 million Americans affected by arthritis. Founded in 1948, the headquarters is located in Atlanta with 47 chapters and 150 community service units.

The Foundation has invested an unprecedented \$380 million for research leading efforts to control the nation's number-one cause of disability. More than 600,000 volunteers and staff work to provide public health messages to educate and empower; public policy to pass legislation benefiting those with arthritis; and evidence-based programs to help Americans take greater control of their arthritis. For more information call 1-800-568-4045 or visit www.arthritis.org.

For more information on the Let's Talk RA campaign or to schedule an interview with Dr. Klippel, contact Joyce Harvey, 404-786-1616, JHarvey@Arthritis.org.