

## Advocating for Better Treatment and Care

Through our network of 78,000 advocates, we're working to help more Americans with arthritis have easier access to coverage, better care and improved health.

### We are leading the way to keep drugs accessible through:

#### ■ Legislation

We are fighting federal- and state-level barriers to care, such as “specialty tiers,” which cover essential drugs at only 50 percent or less. The federal Patients’ Access to Treatments Act (H.R. 460) was reintroduced in 2013 to end specialty tiers, and we are actively recruiting and training advocates to inform and push for meaningful change through similar state legislation. **RESULT:** The advocacy work of the Arthritis Foundation was critical in the enactment of the new specialty tier law in Delaware (SB 35) that caps copays for a single medication at \$150 a month for up to a 30-day supply.

#### ■ Private Drug Plans

In 2013, a large pharmacy benefit company excluded 70 percent of a group of important drugs for people with arthritis: the tumor necrosis factor (TNF) inhibitor biologics and a Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitor. Excluded tier is a category for drugs that makes them unqualified for reimbursement at any level. We worked with the company regarding access to the full range of treatments. **RESULT:** Patients who were already receiving specific arthritis medications in 2013 continue to access those drugs at a discounted price in 2014. For new patients, the company works with them and their health care provider to identify medically reasonable alternatives.

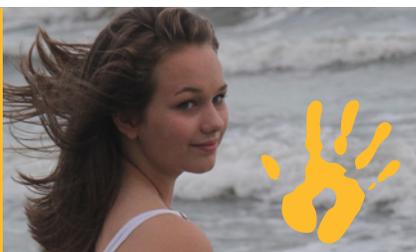
#### ■ Government Drug Plans

In the fall of 2013, our E-Advocates sent 2,500 letters regarding restrictions to medications to the Centers for Medicare/Medicaid Services (CMS) in just three weeks. **RESULT:** Because of our quick mobilization, we made our voices heard, and CMS reconsidered its decision to limit access to biologic drugs approved for arthritis; most are now included.

Arthritis Foundation advocates successfully fought to maintain **\$557 million in research funding** at the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Defense in the 2013 appropriations bill.

## Addressing the Health Care Needs of Children With Arthritis

Rylee Ann Laya of West Virginia travels nearly 200 miles to see her doctor due to a critical shortage of specialists. Currently, there are fewer than 250 board-certified, practicing pediatric rheumatologists in the United States. Eleven states have none at all. We are working to address the critical need for pediatric rheumatologists by advocating for increased expert care for children with arthritis.



“ I’ve had arthritis for as long as I can remember. By the time I was 9, I couldn’t open a water bottle, button or zip my clothes, or at times even hold a pencil. I want to tell my story so that Congress knows the true impact of this disease.”

—Ryan Donnelly, Edison, NJ