



Advocacy in ACTION

Fighting for People with Arthritis



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We'll Be Your Voice on Capitol Hill

Let your voice be heard on Capitol Hill even if you cannot attend the 2015 Arthritis Foundation Advocacy Summit next month in Washington, DC! Advocates at the Summit will hand-deliver your letters to your legislators while in DC, so please take time to share with your member of Congress what life with arthritis is like, and urge them to join the Arthritis Caucus. [A draft letter to get you started can be accessed here.](#)

Please include a picture of yourself, along with your full name and address so that we can match you with your member of Congress. [Encourage your family and friends to write letters as well](#), and [invite them to become an E-Advocate](#).

Send your letters to advocacy@arthritis.org by Thursday, March 12, to ensure that Congress hears from all people with arthritis on March 24!

State Legislation Could Require Doctors to Produce a Bill Before Providing Services

The Arthritis Foundation is following new and exciting state legislation that requires health care providers to create a written cost estimate of services for patient use before a procedure. This would help people make financial decisions in case insurance does not cover the cost of treatment.

This would help patients better understand their out-of-pocket treatment costs before they make any decisions and make cost comparison between service providers faster and easier. Some bills would also require disclosure of whether the services or provider is in the patient's insurance provider network.

Legislation addressing the advanced notice of health care costs is currently pending in Colorado (SB 74), New Jersey (AB 1069 and SB 869), New York (AB 250) and Oklahoma (HB 1940).

Washington State Advocate Speaks to Senate Health Committee

Arthritis advocate **Alyssa Long** testified in front of the Washington State Senate Health Committee in support of required communication from a physician to authorize biosimilars as a substitution for biologics. The Arthritis Foundation believes this communication should occur within 48 hours of the proposed substitution. Long noted in her testimony that biologic medications have changed her life in a positive way, and that lower cost biosimilars may provide greater access to these medications. [Click here to hear Long's testimony.](#)

The Arthritis Foundation agrees that biosimilar medications can provide safe and effective treatment for people with arthritis at a potentially lower cost than name-brand biologic medications. Biologics have offered significant therapeutic benefits to thousands of arthritis patients and have helped many others living with complex chronic diseases. This new class of biosimilars is expected to enter the market place very soon. These complex, genetically-engineered products offer new treatment opportunities for people with forms of inflammatory autoimmune arthritis and other chronic diseases, such as Psoriasis, Crohns and Colitis.

Calling All Veterans With Arthritis: Share Your Stories

One in four veterans has doctor-diagnosed arthritis, a diagnosis that is the second highest cause of military discharge. We want to tell your stories and ask Congress for more research dollars to cure, prevent and better treat arthritis. The Department of Defense has an active research program and we want more of those dollars to go to arthritis. Research advances there mean research advances for all people with arthritis, and eventually a cure.

The Arthritis Foundation is devoting more of our attention and legislative agenda to the higher incidence of arthritis among veterans and military service personnel. We want to help tell the personal stories of all people with arthritis, prompting the need for more research dollars from the Department of Defense.

To show the importance of this issue, the Foundation is drafting a report on the effects of arthritis among military personnel and why this population requires additional attention. We hope to dedicate an entire section of the report to sharing the personal stories of military personnel with arthritis. Help us reach this goal by sending your stories.

If you are an active duty service member, a caregiver or a veteran who has arthritis as a result of your military service, please share your experiences. For further questions, or to help with this project, please contact us at advocacy@arthritis.org.

Thanks in advance for your help, and thank you for your service.

The Arthritis Foundation Speaks Out on Groundbreaking Research Legislation

Earlier this month, the Arthritis Foundation [sent comments to Congressional leaders](#) about the House of Representatives' landmark 21st Century Cures legislative proposal. This proposal would change the way research is conducted and speed the discovery, development and delivery of treatments and cures for all diseases. In our comments, we urged Congress to focus on patient access and out-of-pocket cost issues, and the need to accelerate research on diseases like osteoarthritis, which currently has no cure and no effective therapeutic treatments.

The House of Representatives will be introducing a formal bill in the next few weeks; the Senate is beginning work on this issue as well. Stay tuned for more details.

This is a publication from the Arthritis Foundation Advocacy and Access Department.

For questions, please contact us at advocacy@arthritis.org.

