Appropriations for a Cure

Throughout the appropriations process, Advocates and Ambassadors have been sharing their stories with Congress to encourage them to appropriate funding for research and programs that can improve the lives of people with arthritis. Call on your Senators to increase funding for the CDC Arthritis Program and share your story.

WHY ARE INVESTMENTS FOR ARTHRITIS RESEARCH IMPORTANT?

- Arthritis is the number one cause of disability in the United States.
- There is no cure for arthritis, and for some forms of the disease, there are no disease-modifying therapies.
- It’s time for federal investments in arthritis medical research and programs to match the disease burden.

HOW DO ADVOCATES PLAY A ROLE IN SECURING FUNDING?

- Educating our representatives and their staff about why arthritis should be a priority!
- Our Advocates started engaging in the appropriations process in December by sending more than 600 letters to members of Congress. Each letter promoted education about arthritis as a public health priority to promote funding for the CDC, DOD, and NIH.
- At the Advocacy Summit, participants educated their elected officials about the importance of federal investments in arthritis research and programs by asking members of Congress to support our appropriations asks.
- Recently, the House of Representatives proposed a $1 million increase in funding for the CDC Arthritis Program – together we can help make this proposal a reality by encouraging our Senators to match the House funding level.

WHAT IS THE CDC ARTHRITIS PROGRAM?

The CDC Arthritis Program is the only federal program dedicated solely to arthritis:

- The program plays a significant role in our understanding of the disease by generating data on arthritis prevalence, trends, and factors impacting quality of life
- Nowhere else across the federal government is this type of public health research and data collection completed.
- The need for the program is greater than ever: conservatively, an estimated 78 million Americans will have arthritis by 2040.
The goals of the CDC Arthritis Program are to improve the quality of life for people affected by arthritis and other rheumatic conditions by working with states and other partners to:

- Increase awareness about appropriate arthritis self-management activities.
- Extend the reach of programs proven to improve the quality of life for people with arthritis.
- Decrease the overall burden of arthritis as well as its associated disability, work and activity limitations.

The CDC estimates that physical activity programs can reduce annual health care costs by about $1,000 per person. Expanding the reach of the Arthritis Program can have a significant return on investment and greatly improve the lives of people suffering from arthritis.

The CDC Arthritis Program currently funds 13 state programs around the country (AR, KS, MA, MN, MO, MS, NH, NY, NC, OR, RI, UT, VA, and WA) and increased funding would support resources for additional states, particularly rural, underserved areas with high unmet need. These state programs deliver proven exercise programs and resources that improve health outcomes for people with arthritis.

The CDC Arthritis Program is also responsible for funding the 24/7 Help Line resource at the Arthritis Foundation. Patients can call, email, or submit to our web page a story or question that they may need professional help with. Licensed clinical social workers are on the line and available to help walk that patient through potential solutions.

**Arthritis Prevalence in the United States**

**ARTHRITIS HELPLINE**

Call toll-free!

1.844.571.HELP

arthritis.org/helpline

helpline@arthritis.org
WHAT DO WE DO TO TAKE ACTION?

Step 1: Do Your Research
Before you write your letter you want to make sure you target your legislators appropriately. You’ll want to know two key details:

1. **Do I live in a state with funding for the CDC Arthritis Program?**
   If you live in a CDC Arthritis Program state, you may consider encouraging the appropriation as a way to protect the patients benefitting from the tools and resources made available as a part of the current federal investment. View the map and explanation above to learn if your state is included.

2. **Do either of my Senators sit on a committee of jurisdiction?**
   If you have a Senator that sits on the Senate Committee on Appropriations, you may want to include that in your letter. Their position gives them more influence over this issue than other Senators. Encouraging their support will be very important to a positive outcome on this funding. You can use our Legislator Look Up tool at [bit.ly/LegislatorLookup](http://bit.ly/LegislatorLookup)

Step 2: Modify this Draft Letter

Dear Senator [Name],

As an Arthritis Ambassador, I am writing to ask for your support for robust funding for the CDC Arthritis Program. The House of Representatives recently approved an increase of $1 million in funding for the CDC Arthritis Program for fiscal year 2020, and I am hoping that you will support this investment when it comes time to mark up the Senate version of this appropriations bill.

Arthritis affects 1 in 4 Americans and is the leading cause of disability in the United States. This chronic disease also has a total economic burden of over $300 billion annually - surpassing tobacco-related health effects, cancer, & diabetes.

[Share your story]

There is no cure for arthritis, and for some forms of the disease like osteoarthritis, there is no disease-modifying therapy. Arthritis is an urgent public health priority and it's time for federal investments in arthritis medical research and programs to match the disease burden.
The CDC Arthritis Program currently funds 13 state programs around the country (AR, KS, MA, MN, MO, MS, NH, NY, NC, OR, RI, UT, VA, and WA) and increased funding would support resources for additional states, particularly rural, underserved areas with high unmet need.

Congress must act to ensure that researchers have all the data and tools at their disposal to combat – and perhaps one day even cure – America’s leading cause of disability.

Only through strengthened investments in arthritis research and programs will we be able to unlock a cure for the more than 54 million Americans and 300,000 children with rheumatic disease. I urge you to support a $1 million increase for the CDC Arthritis Program, bringing total funding to $12 million for fiscal year 2020.

Sincerely,
[Name]

Step 3: Connect with Your Senators

If you do not currently have contact information for your members of Congress, you can reach out to them using our Action Center. Simply use the legislator look up tool to find your members of Congress.

[bit.ly/LegislatorLookUp]

By clicking continue, you’ll be able to see all of your elected officials from the President of the United States all the way to your local Assemblyperson.
Click on your Representative of Congress to learn more about who they are and their background.

When you’re ready, check off the box next to your Senator and click compose message. You will either need to do this twice, once for each Senator, or once combining a message to both your Senators.

From there, you’ll be able to send your members of Congress your message asking them to join this important event.

**Step 4: Report Your Activity**

Reporting your Ambassador Activities is essential for our team as we track our impact nationwide. Whereas actions taken in our Action Center auto-populate statistics for our team, Ambassador activities are not as easily tracked. When you are reaching out to your legislators and cultivating relationships, we want to hear about it! The more we know, the more we can support you in your mission to break down barriers to care.

**Step 5: Amplify Your Impact**

Ask your friends and family to take action and make this same ask of Congress in five minutes or less through our pre-formatted action alert. Ask 3 people in your network to send a letter through our Action Center by sharing this short link with them.