

# Arthritis Foundation 2017 Advocacy Report Card

January – June 2017

**We're the Champion of Yes – helping people with arthritis overcome their daily challenges and say Yes to better living! See some of our achievements as we work every day to remove barriers to care for those with arthritis and related conditions.**

[arthritis.org](http://arthritis.org)



## Challenge

**Be the authoritative leader on arthritis with state governments.**

### Action

Actively engaged in over 160 bills and rules in 39 states, achieving victories that increased patient access to care.

### Impact

- Enacted biosimilars legislation in 9 states (IA, KS, MD, MN, MT, NE, NV, NM, SC), impacting more than 5.6 million people with arthritis by protecting the patient-provider relationship.
- Enacted step therapy legislation in 4 states (CO, IA, TX, WV), increasing access to care for more than 6.1 million people with arthritis by limiting step therapy protocols and ensuring that patients receive the medications deemed appropriate by their provider.
- Enacted prior authorization legislation in IN and rules in WA affecting the lives of more than 2.6 million people with arthritis, standardizing protocols and streamlining access to vital treatments.
- Enacted out-of-pocket cost legislation in Washington, DC, increasing access to care for more than 100,000 people with arthritis.

### Action

Connected Arthritis Foundation Advocates with opportunities to engage locally.

### Impact

- Held Capitol Days in 7 States (CA, FL, IA, OH, NY, PA, and WV), resulting in 227 legislative visits.
- Provided in-person and online advocacy training to hundreds of Advocates and Ambassadors across the country.
- Influenced the positive outcomes of 14 bills through Advocate visits and testimonies in 9 states.

## Challenge

**Be the authoritative leader on arthritis with the federal government.**

### Action

Ensured the voice of the arthritis community was heard in health care reform legislation under consideration by Congress.

### Impact

- Developed legislative principles for health reform based on over 3,500 survey responses on the impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on people with arthritis.

- Opposed the American Health Care Act (AHCA) in its current form, generating over 1,500 Advocate letters to Capitol Hill.
- Authored a letter to Congress with policy recommendations to strengthen the AHCA.
- Created an educational FAQ on the impact of the AHCA and the Senate version of the bill for people with arthritis.
- Hosted a webinar with the American College of Rheumatology on the possible impact of health care reform legislation on the arthritis community and ways to engage.

**Action**

Raised awareness of the importance of arthritis research and public health programs.

**Impact**

- Educated more than 30 Congressional offices at an Arthritis 101 briefing.
- Helped secure signatures from 33 members of Congress on a letter supporting the establishment of a dedicated arthritis research program at the Department of Defense.
- Engaged with members of Congress to increase funding for research at the National Institutes of Health and maintain funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Arthritis Program.

**Action**

Advocated to decrease barriers to care for people with arthritis.

**Impact**

- Helped secure the reintroduction of S. 989, the Ensuring Children’s Access to Specialty Care Act, to address the shortage of pediatric rheumatologists by making pediatric subspecialists eligible for a federal loan repayment program.
- Supported H.R. 2077, the Restoring the Patient’s Voice Act, which would place appropriate limits on the use of step therapy by insurance companies.
- Urged reauthorization of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) User Fee Agreements, giving the FDA the resources it needs to review and approve drugs and devices.

**Challenge**

**Increase grassroots engagement in federal and state policies.**

**Action**

Advanced arthritis awareness through grassroots advocacy with state and federal policymakers.

**Impact**

- Coordinated more than 250 face to face meetings with Congressional offices for 400 Advocacy Summit attendees.
- The Advocacy Summit resulted in 4 new members joining the Congressional Arthritis Caucus, now totaling 140 members.
- Honored 40 Platinum Ambassadors at the 2017 Advocacy Summit.
- Enhanced our Ambassador program with special speakers on bimonthly webinars and opportunities to engage their elected officials on critical issues facing people with arthritis.
- Hosted 6 Advocate Webinar Series briefings to provide lessons on advocacy initiatives, tools and resources.
- Added more than 14,000 Advocates and 50 Ambassadors in the first half of the year.
- Established Junior Ambassador Program and recruited nearly 50 members to raise awareness for juvenile arthritis.

**Action**

Engaged Advocates to ensure that the voices and needs of patients were considered in clinical drug reviews by the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER).

**Impact**

- 4 Ambassadors participated in a public meeting for ICER’s clinical review of rheumatoid arthritis (RA) drugs, including 1 as a reviewer and panelist.
- Submitted comments to ICER on their draft RA report, reflecting the challenges patients face in finding the right treatment and accessing the drugs they need.
- Positively influenced ICER’s final report by sharing stories of people living with RA and their experiences with managing their disease.
- Urged ICER to consider our concerns about their methods and full inclusion of patients in their drug review process.