

The Arthritis Foundation is boldly pursuing a cure for America's #1 cause of disability, while championing the fight against arthritis with life-changing resources, science, advocacy and community connections.

In 2017, we ...

Demanded that people with arthritis be heard in state and local legislative decisions.

- We grew to more than 150,000 Advocates and Ambassadors who are fighting on the front lines to break down barriers to care and hosted our largest Advocacy Summit with more than 400 attendees. Together, we were actively involved in more than 163 policies in 39 states, resulting in 17 new state laws.
- As health care repeal and replace debates were underway, we were there at every turn – in contact with patients, having dialogue with policymakers, keeping our constituents informed and offering guidance and resources.

Empowered millions of people to live their best life with tools, tips and expert guidance to navigate conversations with health care providers and continue to do what they love with less pain.

- With more than 1,800 callers this year, the help line continues to provide people with real-time help.
- More than 650,000 constituents learned self-management skills with our powerful tools.

Connected thousands of people together who understand the challenges of living with arthritis to share ideas, hope and communal knowledge.

- The Arthritis Support Network expanded to 53 communities, offering volunteer-driven personal support.
- Across the country, JA days, JA camps and two JA conference locations connected close to 12,000 families together.

Transformed the course of treatment for osteoarthritis and forged a path towards conquering all types of the disease.

- Our groundbreaking [Osteoarthritis Patient-Focused Drug Development meeting](#) gave patients the opportunity to share their point of view to help inform the Food and Drug Administration.
- The Arthritis Foundation Osteoarthritis (OA) Center of Excellence was formed to improve clinical trials with a collaborative network and is currently investing in five institutions that will determine identifiable biomarkers for each stage of OA.

- We expanded the CARRA registry to include lupus, JDM, and scleroderma and increased participation in research by launching [PARTNERS](#) registration with 200 JA patients.

2017 Top Accomplishments

Advocacy & Access

We spoke out and joined other organizations to request actions that aid people with chronic conditions like arthritis.

- The Foundation was actively involved on health care reform, hosting a [webinar](#), issuing [FAQs](#) on the House and Senate bills, co-authoring an op-ed in the [Morning Consult](#), sending recommendations to Congress with bipartisan solutions, and urging senators to vote “no” on the Graham-Cassidy repeal and replace proposal.
- We [took a stand](#) on the administration’s fiscal year 2018 budget, asserting that deep spending cuts in health care would negatively affect the growing number of Americans with arthritis.
- For two years, the Arthritis Foundation and other patient organizations have advocated for the reversal of a Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) biosimilars reimbursement policy for physician-administered drugs that could have negatively impacted patients and providers. In November, CMS announced they would reverse their policy. A crucial victory for the arthritis community, [the decision](#) will help foster competition while encouraging innovation.
- This year, we successfully engaged with the Institute for Clinical and Economic Review (ICER) during its review of the effectiveness of RA treatments compared to the costs. During their March meeting, we presented patient-centered survey data and invited three patients to testify. Although we don’t endorse ICER’s final report, we influenced it to minimize the obstacles it created for people with arthritis.
- We appealed to [Appropriations Committee leaders](#) for more investment in important wellness initiatives, like growing the Arthritis Program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and expanding research at the National Institutes of Health. Both the House and Senate bills proposed flat funding for the Arthritis Program, which we consider a victory.
- On Aug. 18, President Trump signed the Food and Drug Administration Reauthorization Act, which includes a focus on engaging patients in drug development and decision making. The Arthritis Foundation began advocating for the bill nearly two years ago. During a “Hill Day” earlier this year, Foundation board members educated Congress on the importance of involving patients in the drug approval process.

- In Oct. 2017, we responded to the president's executive orders that could affect coverage for people who have health insurance through the exchanges. We wrote an [FAQ](#) to help people with arthritis understand the executive orders and how they might be impacted, and we signed onto a [letter](#) expressing concern about the potential for weakened patient protections like Essential Health Benefits.

Seventeen state legislative wins increased access to care for more than 20 million Americans.

- Biosimilars legislation in 10 states (IA, KS, MD, MN, MT, NE, NV, NM, NY, SC), impacting more than 5.6 million people with arthritis by protecting the patient-provider relationship.
- 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.
- 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.
- Out-of-pocket cost legislation in Washington, DC, increasing access to care for more than 100,000 people with arthritis.
- Network adequacy legislation in IL, impacting more than 2.3 million people with arthritis by ensuring that health plan networks are transparent. Learn more about our [2017 advocacy accomplishments](#).

Help & Support

The Arthritis Foundation is available whenever, wherever people need personalized help and support.

- The [Arthritis Support Network](#) grew from 30 to 53 groups across the country. These groups provide personalized help and support by building a community of support through frequent educational and social activities. The 10th Gathering Conference of Arthritis Support Network members was held June 9-11 in Kansas City.
- Across the country, the Arthritis Foundation hosted local events to empower participants with expert advice. Thirty-Eight Living Your Yes with RA events educated more than 1,135 attendees about how to set and achieve their personal goals through effective dialogue with their health care provider. Five Cooking Made Easier events were piloted as well.
- The Arthritis Foundation helped more than 1,800 Helpline callers on topics including general arthritis management, access to health care

professionals and financial assistance, as well as provided personalized support with 650,000 visits to our [online tools](#).

- The Arthritis Foundation hosted a Twitter chat on open enrollment on Nov. 9, resulting in 1.8 million impressions of the hashtag #AsktheAF and @ArthritisFdn and 78,000 unique Twitter accounts engaged in the dialogue.

We brought patients to the table to help improve and inform our work.

- More than 50,000 constituents received a survey inviting them to provide feedback about 19 Arthritis Foundation mission tools, resources and events. These insights helped fine-tune the Foundation's new mission strategy.
- More than 18 listening sessions spanning topics such as osteoarthritis, health care reform and input on our programs and tools will shape the development and refinement of mission offerings.
- To ensure the patient voice is infused in everything we do, 12 arthritis patients are a part of our new Patient Leadership Council.
- The Arthritis Foundation partnered with the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) to pilot an Arthritis Foundation Patient Representative program, inviting ten highly involved patients to the [ACR/ARHP annual meeting](#). They shared insights on the value of patient engagement in research with attending clinicians and researchers. The dedicated hashtag, [#AFPatientReps](#), resulted in 1.1 million impressions, along with 9 million impressions of [#ACR17](#) with 264 total tweets and 592 retweets.

Scientific Discovery

The Arthritis Foundation is pursuing innovative discoveries to advance treatments for more than 100 types of arthritis and ultimately find a cure, investing more than \$500 million in arthritis research over the past seven decades.

Active project highlights:

- A team headed by Dr. Farshid Guilak is reprogramming stem cells into “smart” cells that automatically administer an [arthritis vaccine](#) to stop inflammation and repair damaged cartilage.
- After injecting adenosine, a sugar-based molecule, into the joints of research mice with knee OA, Dr. Bruce Cronstein and his team observed [improvements in joint damage](#).

- Foundation-funded investigator Dr. James Martin has filed a patent for a pharmaceutical that claims to [enhance cartilage repair](#) in mammals and could lead to OA treatment advancements for humans.
- A team of researchers at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City, Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota and the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) are demonstrating the feasibility of using state-of-the-art technologies to monitor joint health after ACL injuries. They are testing if new MRI techniques can measure the molecular changes that occur immediately after an ACL tear and potentially treat OA.
- Dr. James Jarvis, one of our 2016 Delivering on Discovery awardees, recently published [results](#) from his project in *Nature*. This study provides genetic insights into juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) based on whole genome sequencing of 48 children with polyarticular JIA. [His new project](#) is working toward personalized treatment of children with arthritis.
- The Arthritis Foundation Osteoarthritis (OA) Center of Excellence will improve clinical trials with a collaborative network that launches trials and ensures data sharing. The newly formed center is currently investing in research that will determine identifiable biomarkers for each stage of OA. Five institutions have recently been awarded research grants, including Duke University, University of California, San Francisco and Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

We teamed up with other organizations to bolster our progress in conquering arthritis.

- We held an interactive [Facebook Live and Twitter Periscope event](#), in partnership with the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), about engaging patients in arthritis research, which resulted in more than 16,000 people reached and nearly 5,000 video views.
- Our groundbreaking [Osteoarthritis Patient-Focused Drug Development meeting](#) gave patients the opportunity to share their experiences and concerns, which will help inform the benefit/risk framework of the Food and Drug Administration. [The Voice of the Patient Report](#) is the culmination of our efforts to engage patients in all aspects of treatment development for arthritis patients.

Juvenile Arthritis

Approximately 70 percent of parents feel that nobody understands how arthritis affects their children. As we are pursuing a cure, we're working to change that by bringing JA families together and equipping them to overcome their unique challenges.

- We hosted our 33rd annual National Juvenile Arthritis Conference in Houston and Indianapolis. Since its inception, the JA Conference has touched the lives of more than 25,000 participants. This year, we hosted a total of 458 families and 100 young adults in two locations and awarded \$360,000 in scholarships to offset travel expenses, making it possible for many families to join us.
- In partnership with The Hospital for Sick Children, we launched the [iPeer2Peer mentorship pilot program](#) to support teens with JA and other rheumatic diseases. During the initial pilot period, 20 teens and their parents from across the nation applied to be a part of the pilot program and 12 mentor (young adults) and mentee (teens) matches were made this year.
- Across the country, we held 47 summer camps and teen retreats for 1,862 families and 2,640 kids, giving them the chance to be among their own so they could bond, learn and have fun. Many camp staff and volunteers are former campers themselves who want to help others with JA conquer their struggles and know they're not alone.

The Arthritis Foundation is increasing participation in research as an initial step to transforming how care is delivered to children with all types of arthritis.

- We recently launched [PARTNERS](#) (Patients, Advocates and Rheumatology Network for Research and Service) registration with 200 JA community patients. Two surveys were distributed in September. One survey prioritized research supported by PARTNERS and the other focused on patient and parent perspectives on mental health needs in rheumatology.