



**The Arthritis Foundation
Welcomes the 116th Congress**

arthritis.org/advocate





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On behalf of the more than 54 million Americans with arthritis, the Arthritis Foundation invites you to become a Champion of Yes for people living with this disease, many of whom are your constituents.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 20 percent of the population of every state has arthritis.

As the number one cause of disability in the United States, arthritis includes more than 100 different diseases and conditions that attack the body's joints and connective tissues. It is chronic and can be complex to treat; and it can have a devastating impact on a person's quality of life. It is a pervasive, debilitating disease, affecting 1 in 4 Americans, and 1 in 3 military veterans.

Leading the fight for the arthritis community, the Arthritis Foundation helps people with arthritis conquer everyday battles through life-changing information and resources, access to optimal care, advancements in science and community connections.

Osteoarthritis (OA) and rheumatoid arthritis (RA) alone cost over \$300 billion a year in direct and indirect health expenses. Some 27 million Americans have OA and unfortunately there is no disease modifying drug on the market today that can treat their disease.

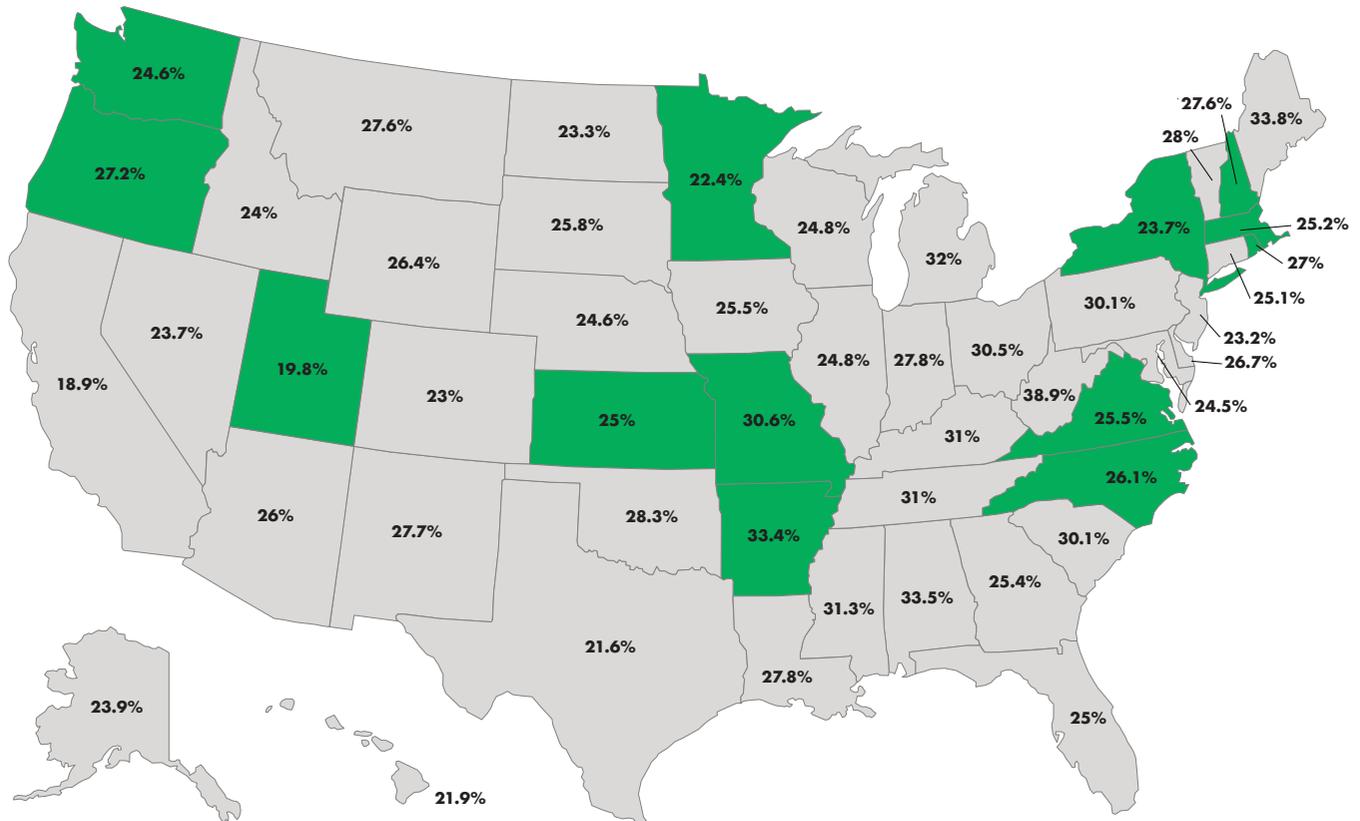
People with arthritis depend on nearly every aspect of the health care system – from access to specialists and prescription drugs to medical research that will lead to better treatments and ultimately a cure. The Arthritis Foundation supports federal and state legislation that reduces barriers to care and helps people with arthritis live a better life. We hope that you will join us as a Champion of Yes for your constituents who are living with arthritis by making it a priority to support legislation that helps people with this disease.

Visit arthritis.org/advocate to learn more about our policy priorities and advocacy initiatives.

Arthritis is a serious disease that affects millions of people of all ages, races and ethnic groups – and it's growing.

More than 54 million adults and an estimated 300,000 children in the U.S. are living with arthritis. By 2040, the number of adults in the U.S. with doctor-diagnosed arthritis is projected to increase by 49 percent to more than 78 million (25.9 percent of all adults). In 48 of 50 states, at least 20 percent of the population has arthritis, yet only 13 states receive funding for arthritis research and programs from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Arthritis Prevalence in the United States



KEY

 CDC-Funded State

Spotlight on Step Therapy

Step therapy, sometimes known as “fail first,” is a practice employed by many insurers that requires patients to try lower-cost therapies before being approved for the therapy their doctor prescribed – even when doctors are certain that the cheaper option won’t be effective. When inappropriately used, step therapy can undermine the clinical judgment of health care providers and put patients’ health at unnecessary risk. Many arthritis patients must try multiple drugs before finding one that works for them, so the ability to remain on a drug that works is critical.

A survey of more than 1,400 patients conducted in 2016 by the Arthritis Foundation revealed:

- Over 50% of all patients reported having to try two or more different drugs prior to getting the one their doctor had originally prescribed.
- Step therapy was stopped in 39% of cases because the drugs were ineffective, and 20% of the time due to worsening conditions.
- Nearly 25% of patients who switched insurance providers were required to repeat step therapy with their new carrier.
- A majority of respondents experienced negative health effects from delays in getting on the right treatment.

There is a simple and straightforward way to reform the step therapy process: Congress can pass the Restoring the Patient’s Voice Act. The legislation was first introduced in 2017 by Representatives Brad Wenstrup, DPM (R-OH) and Raul Ruiz, MD (D-CA) who have both encountered step therapy in their own practice of medicine. The bill streamlines step therapy for patients with employer-sponsored insurance by:

- Establishing a clear exceptions process for step therapy review by health insurance plans;
- Establishing a reasonable and clear timeframe for override decisions; and
- Requiring insurers to consider the patient’s medical history, the provider’s expertise in partnership with their own patient, and respect the health care provider’s professional judgment – before a health plan can delay or outright deny a patient’s ability to access a medically necessary treatment.

In addition, the Medicare program recently changed its policies around step therapy. Last year, Medicare Advantage plans were given permission to begin utilizing step therapy protocols for Medicare Part B drugs, which are typically physician-administered drugs. Applying the robust guardrails in the Restoring the Patient’s Voice Act to the Medicare program would ensure these beneficiaries can similarly receive timely access to medications and treatments.



What Else You Can Do to Help People with Arthritis

Address the Nationwide Shortage of Pediatric Rheumatologists

An estimated 300,000 children have arthritis, yet there are fewer than 420 board-certified practicing pediatric rheumatologists in the United States, mainly clustered in big cities. This means that for every one pediatric rheumatologist there are 714 children with arthritis that need treatment. Startlingly, 10 states have no pediatric rheumatologists and 5 states have only one. Early diagnosis and treatment of arthritis is critical for disease management, and it can be difficult for providers untrained in pediatric rheumatology to diagnose this chronic disease.

Legislation that makes loan repayment available for pediatric subspecialists like pediatric rheumatologists to practice in underserved areas is sorely needed. A solution can be accomplished in one of two ways. First, Congress can act to allow pediatric subspecialists to be eligible to apply for the National Health Service Corps loan repayment program. Second, Congress can reauthorize, and provide funding for, Section 775 of the Public Health Service Act, which allows a pediatric subspecialist to receive up to \$35,000 per year for each year of service, for a maximum of 3 years if they commit to practicing in an underserved area of the country.

Establish a Dedicated Arthritis Research Program at the Department of Defense

One in three veterans has doctor-diagnosed arthritis (compared to one in four in the civilian population), and it is the second leading cause of medical discharge from the U.S Army. The physical demands of military service, in addition to the increased risk of arthritis from combat injury, greatly increase the number of service members and veterans who live with this disease.

A dedicated fund at the Department of Defense (DoD) through the Congressionally-Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) will ensure a committed investment in arthritis research and accelerate the research already underway at the DoD. This research is not being done anywhere else and will benefit service members, veterans, and everyone living with arthritis. By keeping service members on active duty and helping veterans remain active, millions of dollars could be saved in health care and disability costs at the DoD and Department of Veterans Affairs.

Increase Funding for the CDC Arthritis Program

The CDC Arthritis Program is the only federal program dedicated solely to helping people with arthritis through public health research and evidence-based programs. Although arthritis is the nation's leading cause of disability, the CDC Arthritis Program only has enough funds to operate in 13 states (see map on page 3). These state programs connect people with arthritis to evidence-based, self-management programs that are crucial to controlling the disease.

Congress should increase funding for the CDC Arthritis Program by \$5 million, bringing the total to \$16 million. These additional resources would allow the program to support up to 6 new state programs for a total of 19 states, create an Arthritis Management Network, and increase support for the national dissemination of evidenced-based programs.

Join the Congressional Arthritis Caucus

The Congressional Arthritis Caucus is a clearinghouse for information and a bipartisan forum to educate members about arthritis, how the disease impacts their communities, and how to support federal and local efforts to improve access to care.

If your Member of Congress would like to join the Arthritis Caucus, please contact advocacy@arthritis.org.

Congressional Arthritis Caucus Members

House

Don Young (R-AK)
Mo Brooks (R-AL)
Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
Raul Grijalva (D-AZ)
Salud Carbajal (D-CA)
Anna Eshoo (D-CA)
Julia Brownley (D-CA)
Tony Cardenas (D-CA)
Susan Davis (D-CA)
Jared Huffman (D-CA)
Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)
Doris Matsui (D-CA)
Jerry McNerney (D-CA)
Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA)
Raul Ruiz (D-CA)
Linda Sanchez (D-CA)
Adam Schiff (D-CA)
Brad Sherman (D-CA)
Eric Swalwell (D-CA)
Norma Torres (D-CA)
Maxine Waters (D-CA)
Joe Courtney (D-CT)
John Larson (D-CT)
Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC)
Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE)
Brian Mast (R-FL)
Gus Bilirakis (R-FL)
Alcee Hastings (D-FL)
Ted Yoho (R-FL)
Frederica Wilson (D-FL)
Buddy Carter (R-GA)
Hank Johnson (D-GA)
Rob Woodall (R-GA)
Steve King (R-IA)
David Loebsack (D-IA)
Cheri Bustos (D-IL)
Danny Davis (D-IL)
Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)
Larry Bucshon (R-IN)
Andy Barr (R-KY)
Brett Guthrie (R-KY)
Hal Rogers (R-KY)
John Yarmuth (D-KY)

Bill Keating (D-MA)
Joe Kennedy (D-MA)
Stephen Lynch (D-MA)
Seth Moulton (D-MA)
Jamie Raskin (D-MD)
Debbie Dingell (D-MI)
Brenda Lawrence (D-MI)
Betty McCollum (D-MN)
Collin Peterson (D-MN)
Blaine Luetkemeyer (R-MO)
Vicky Hartzler (R-MO)
Patrick McHenry (R-NC)
David Price (D-NC)
Ann McLane Kuster (D-NH)
Donald Norcross (D-NJ)
Frank Pallone (D-NJ)
Bill Pascrell (D-NJ)
Donald Milford Payne (D-NJ)
Eliot Engel (D-NY)
Peter King (R-NY)
Nita Lowey (D-NY)
Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY)
Gregory Meeks (D-NY)
Jose Serrano (D-NY)
Lee Zeldin (R-NY)
Joyce Beatty (D-OH)
Steve Chabot (R-OH)
David Joyce (R-OH)
Marcy Kaptur (D-OH)
Tim Ryan (D-OH)
Steve Stivers (R-OH)
Michael Turner (R-OH)
Brad Wenstrup (R-OH)
Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)
Peter DeFazio (D-OR)
Greg Walden (R-OR)
Mike Doyle (D-PA)
Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)
Jim Langevin (D-RI)
Joe Wilson (R-SC)
Jim Cooper (D-TN)
Scott DesJarlais (R-TN)
Michael Burgess (R-TX)

Mike Conaway (R-TX)
Lloyd Doggett (D-TX)
Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)
Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Kenny Marchant (R-TX)
Filemon Vela (D-TX)
Rob Bishop (R-UT)
Chris Stewart (R-UT)
Donald Beyer (D-VA)
Gerry Connolly (D-VA)
Stacey Plaskett (D-VI)
Suzan DelBene (D-WA)
Jaime Herrera Beutler (R-WA)
Derek Kilmer (D-WA)
Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA)
Adam Smith (D-WA)
Ron Kind (D-WI)
Mark Pocan (D-WI)
David McKinley (R-WV)
Alex Mooney (R-WV)

Senate

John Boozman (R-AR)
Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)
Michael Bennet (D-CO)
Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
Chris Murphy (D-CT)
Tom Carper (D-DE)
Chris Coons (D-DE)
Jim Risch (R-ID)
Todd Young (R-IN)
Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
Angus King (I-ME)
Jon Tester (D-MT)
Deb Fischer (R-NE)
Chuck Schumer (D-NY)
Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
John Thune (R-SD)
Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)
Maria Cantwell (D-WA)
Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)
John Barrasso (R-WY)

How the Arthritis Foundation Can Help YOU

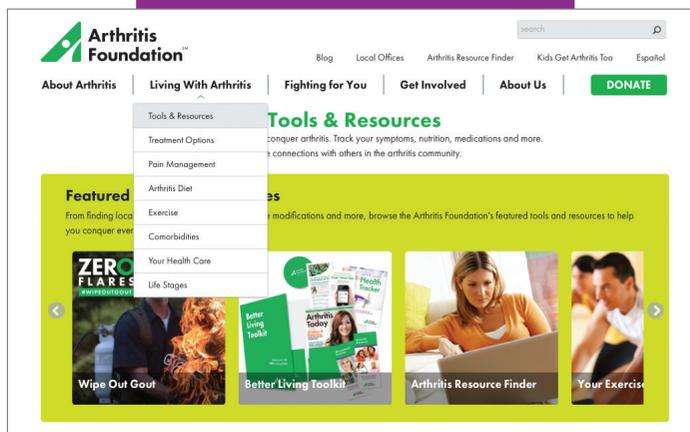
Whether it's in the thousands or millions, many of your constituents have arthritis. The Arthritis Foundation wants to help you connect with them.

Our goal is to help people with arthritis live life to its fullest – easing their pain and illuminating a path toward wellness. That's why we offer the following tools and resources:

Visit arthritis.org/tools and start saying YES to MORE.



MORE information is located on our site under *Living With Arthritis, Tools & Resources*



Arthritis Resource Finder

Entering a ZIP code brings up a list of essential arthritis-related resources in the selected community, from physicians and physical therapists to medical equipment suppliers and home health agencies.

ArthritisResourceFinder.org

Your Exercise Solution® (YES)

This tool allows users to create a customized exercise plan, matching various activities to their interests and level of fitness. The descriptions even include movement modifications to accommodate specific joint concerns.

YourExerciseSolution.org



Better Living Toolkit

This powerful package of information and resources helps people better understand and manage their type of arthritis so they can live life to its fullest.



BetterLivingToolkit.org

Person to Person Support

The Arthritis Helpline is staffed by licensed clinical social workers who provide callers with 24/7 assistance on a variety of topics, such as access to care and financial assistance.



Email helpline@arthritis.org or call toll-free at **1-844-571-HELP (4357)**

Now I have more confidence staying active!

I have severe OA in my knee, and thought I would have to give up golf. **Your Exercise Solution** gave me specific tips about my swing and type of shoe to wear.

Live Yes! Arthritis Network

The Live Yes! Arthritis Network makes connections possible both in person and online to empower people to live their best life. People with arthritis find strength in each other, manage stress and take control of their health care.

arthritis.org/liveyes



For more information, contact: advocacy@arthritis.org

#AdvocateforArthritis

advocacy@arthritis.org
arthritis.org/advocate

