

**The Arthritis Foundation
Welcomes the 119th Congress**





Arthritis Foundation[®]

Champions of Yes

arthritis.org/advocate

1-800-283-7800

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the nearly 60 million Americans living with arthritis, the Arthritis Foundation invites you to join us as a Champion of Yes for people living with this disease.

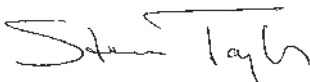
Did you know that 1 in 5 of your adult constituents has doctor-diagnosed arthritis, and it is the #1 cause of disability in the U.S.? It is a pervasive and costly chronic illness, totaling over \$300 billion each year in direct and indirect expenses. Unfortunately, there is no cure for arthritis, and for many conditions, like osteoarthritis (OA), there is no disease-modifying treatment currently available. For patients who do have treatment options, medications are often expensive, and millions of patients have difficulty affording or accessing them.

The Arthritis Foundation is committed to a vision over the next five years to boldly pursue progress toward conquering arthritis in all its forms. The Foundation is here to unite and serve the arthritis community through our patient and health care provider education programs, funding of arthritis research and our work in advocacy.

The 118th Congress made great headway in improving affordability and access for patients and funding federal research programs specifically for arthritis. We look forward to working with the 119th Congress to build on this momentum and to ensure that treatments are easily accessible and affordable. Momentum for Pharmacy Benefit Manager Reform grew stronger at the end of the 118th Congress. We urge Congress to not lose this momentum and pass PBM reform early this year. In addition, we ask Congress to address inappropriate use of step therapy, prior authorization and other insurance utilization management practices that can prevent patients from receiving the treatment they need when they need it. In addition, Congress must work much more aggressively to support arthritis research and programs that are woefully underfunded compared to the disease's burdens, with only \$11 million dedicated to the CDC Arthritis Research Program and \$10 million dedicated to CDMRP arthritis funding in the federal budget. In contrast, conditions such as Gulf War Illness and Neurofibromatosis receive hundreds of millions from the CDMRP each year. Arthritis is the second leading cause of discharge, and we urge Congress to increase the program's funding.

People living with arthritis depend on nearly every aspect of the health care system — from access to specialists and prescription drugs to medical research — and all too often they cannot adequately access the providers, services and treatments they need. We frequently find that the patient is not at the center of their health care decisions. This must end.

This packet covers ways you can support your constituents who battle arthritis, as well as ways the Arthritis Foundation can support your service to them. In the coming months, we will also share with you the Arthritis Foundation's new 5-year strategic direction, "Accelerating Possibilities and Promise" for those with arthritis. This 5-year direction will continue to build upon the Foundation's 75-year history of ensuring that the patient voice is considered and heard when making any and all health care policy decisions. Please visit arthritis.org/advocate to learn more about our policy priorities and advocacy initiatives.



Steven Taylor, MBA

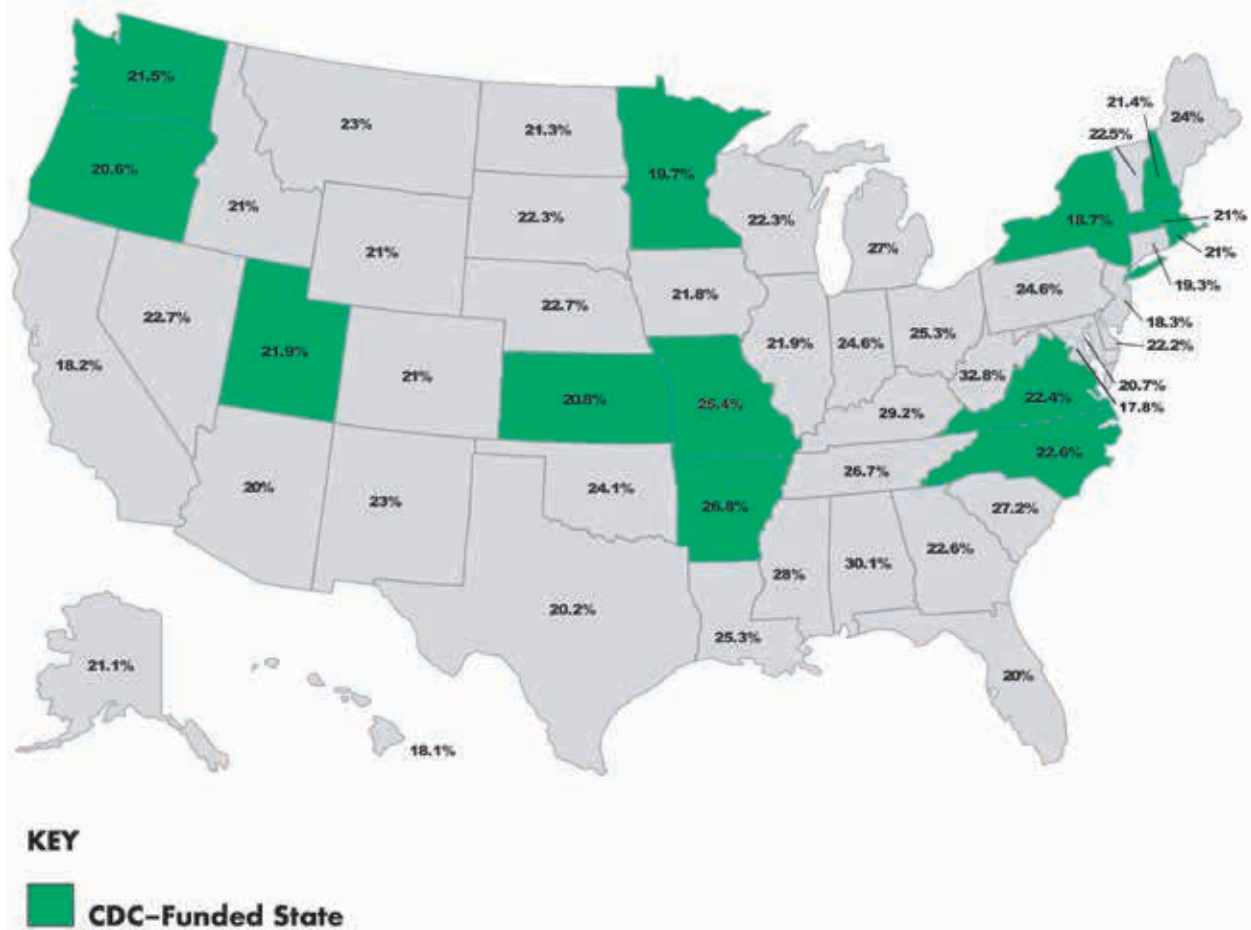
President and CEO

Arthritis Foundation

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

Nearly 60 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% to more than 78 million (25.9% of all adults). In 48 of 50 states, at least 20% 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



What Can You Do to Help People With Arthritis?

Here are their priorities. They need your support.

Make arthritis treatments easier to access through utilization management and health coverage reforms.

Practices like step therapy and prior authorization hit arthritis patients particularly hard. And inappropriate practice of these measures can lead to major administrative burdens, patients stopping their medications and worsening of their diseases. On top of that, health plans are increasingly restricting the use of copay assistance, which is a vital lifeline for many patients. It helps them afford their medications in an era of high deductibles and high rates of coinsurance.

You can help by supporting:

- The Safe Step Act, which would place commonsense guardrails around the practice of step therapy.
- Prior authorization reform expansion.
- The HELP Copays Act, which would ensure that copay assistance counts toward patient cost-sharing.
- Policies ensuring that cost savings from rebates go to patients, in addition to other pharmacy benefit management and health plan reforms that put patients back at the center.

Make sure there's an adequate workforce to meet the needs of children with arthritis.

An estimated 300,000 children in the U.S. have arthritis, yet there is a severe shortage of pediatric rheumatologists. Seven states have no pediatric rheumatologist, and six states have only one. Early diagnosis and treatment of arthritis is critical for disease management. The Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment Program provides loan repayment in exchange for service in under-served areas. Congress should increase funding in the annual appropriations bill and ensure that funding formulas are properly written to enable a wide variety of clinicians to access the funding.

Make sure arthritis research and programs are fully funded to meet the growing burden of this disease.

- **Fully fund the CDC Arthritis Program at \$60 million.** This is the only federal program dedicated solely to helping people with arthritis through public health research and evidence-based programs. The program currently has funds to operate in only 13 states. These state programs connect people with arthritis to evidence-based, self-management programs that are crucial to controlling the disease.
- **Fully Fund the Department of Defense (DoD) Arthritis Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) at \$20 million.** One in three veterans has doctor-diagnosed arthritis, and it's the second leading cause of medical discharge from the U.S Army. The physical demands of military service, on top of the increased risk of arthritis from combat injury, greatly increase the number of active-duty service members, retired military and veterans who live with this disease. We thank the 118th Congress for establishing Arthritis within the CDMRP, which will ensure a committed investment in arthritis research and accelerate the research already underway at the DoD. However, considering Arthritis is the second leading cause of discharge from the military, we urge Congress to increase funding allocated for arthritis research to \$20 million.

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.

Congressional Arthritis Caucus Members

House

Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ)
Julia Brownley (D-CA)
Salud Carbajal (D-CA)
Jared Huffman (D-CA)
Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)
Doris Matsui (D-CA)
Raul Ruiz (D-CA)
Linda Sánchez (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)
Gus Bilirakis (R-FL)
Brian Mast (R-FL)
Buddy Carter (R-GA)
Hank Johnson (D-GA)
Danny Davis (D-IL)
Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)
Andy Barr (R-KY)

Brett Guthrie (R-KY)
Hal Rogers (R-KY)
Bill Keating (D-MA)
Stephen Lynch (D-MA)
Seth Moulton (D-MA)
Jamie Raskin (D-MD)
Debbie Dingell (D-MI)
Betty McCollum (D-MN)
Donald Norcross (D-NJ)
Frank Pallone (D-NJ)
Gregory Meeks (D-NY)
Joyce Beatty (D-OH)
Marcy Kaptur (D-OH)
Michael Turner (R-OH)
Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)
Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA)
Joe Wilson (R-SC)
Scott DesJarlais (R-TN)
Lloyd Doggett (D-TX)
Don Beyer (D-VA)
Gerry Connolly (D-VA)
Stacey Plaskett (D-VI)
Suzan DelBene (D-WA)
Adam Smith (D-WA)
Mark Pocan (D-WI)

Senate

John Boozman (R-AR)
Kyrsten Sinema (D-AZ)
Adam Schiff (D-CA)
Michael Bennet (D-CO)
Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
Chris Murphy (D-CT)
Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE)
Chris Coons (D-DE)
Jim Risch (R-ID)
Todd Young (R-IN)
Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
Angus King (I-ME)
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)

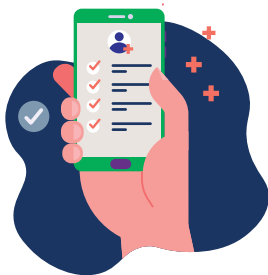
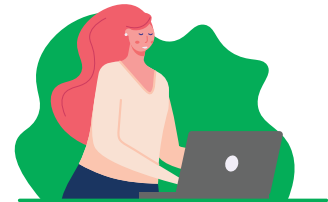
How the Arthritis Foundation Can Help YOU

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 support people with arthritis so they can live life to its fullest — easing their pain and offering a path toward wellness. That's why we offer the following tools and resources:

Webinars, Expert Advice, Tools & Resources

Visit [arthritis.org](https://www.arthritis.org) and start saying YES to MORE.



Your Coverage, Your Care

This powerful resource will help you better understand health coverage options and prepare for open enrollment, choose the right coverage for arthritis care needs, minimize claim denials, manage the denial process with step-by-step instructions, reduce costs and find financial assistance programs.

[arthritis.org/rx-for-access](https://www.arthritis.org/rx-for-access)

Take Control of Pain

Get expert tips, strategies and support to help you manage arthritis pain from the experts at the Arthritis Foundation.

[BetterLivingToolkit.org](https://www.betterlivingtoolkit.org)



Your Exercise Solution® (YES)

This series of videos helps users 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.

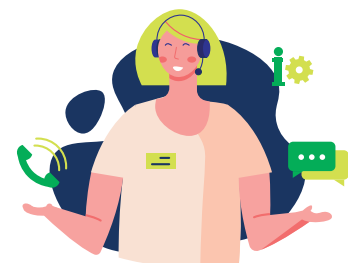
[YourExerciseSolution.org](https://www.yourexercisesolution.org)

Helpline

The Arthritis Foundation Helpline has and trained staff who offer support on a variety of topics, such as access to care and financial assistance — in English, Spanish and other languages.

Email helpline@arthritis.org or call toll-free at **1.800.283.7800**

For more information, email advocacy@arthritis.org and follow us on X (Twitter) at [@AFAdvocacy](https://twitter.com/AFAdvocacy)





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