

Arthritis Foundation 2018 Advocacy Report Card

January – June 2018

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



GRASSROOTS

Challenge

Increase grassroots engagement in federal and state policies.

Action

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

Impact

- Enhanced our grassroots program with our new online Action Center which has generated over 1,500 letters to Congress since January.
- Created digital story banking tools to cultivate patient stories and identify emerging issues to strengthen our advocacy agenda.
- Hosted 3 Twitter Chats to foster community and provide tools and resources to people affected by arthritis, collectively reaching over 4 million viewers.
- Coordinated nearly 140 face-to-face meetings with Congressional offices for 130 Platinum Ambassador Assembly attendees.
- Honored 51 Platinum Ambassadors at the 2018 Platinum Ambassador Assembly.
- Facilitated the first ever Virtual Platinum Ambassador Assembly which garnered over 11 million impressions online.
- Grew the Junior Ambassador program to over 80 members in its first year, providing action opportunities for teens to be the voice for Juvenile Arthritis.

FEDERAL

Challenge

Be the authoritative leader on arthritis with the federal government.

Action

Ensured the voice of the arthritis community was heard as the administration and Congress explored health reform proposals.

Impact

- Authored a letter to the administration opposing the expansion of short-term health plans, which lack important patient protections for people with arthritis.
- Joined dozens of organizations to elevate the voice of patient communities about unintended consequences from the expansion of association health plans.
- Developed consistent approach to respond to Medicaid waiver proposals at the federal level, which could create barriers to care for people with work limitations.

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Action

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

Impact

- Educated more than 20 Congressional offices at a briefing about the significant economic burden of arthritis in the United States.
- Secured signatures from 37 members of Congress on a letter supporting the establishment of a dedicated arthritis medical research program at the Department of Defense.
- Increased by 80 percent the number of members of Congress who signed a letter requesting robust funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Arthritis Program.
- Assumed leadership role of key coalition supporting arthritis and musculoskeletal research at the National Institutes of Health.

Action

Advocated to decrease barriers to care for people with arthritis.

Impact

- Helped secure permanent repeal of therapy caps in Medicare, which limited the amount of outpatient rehabilitation services that the program would cover each year.
- Added 32 cosponsors to H.R. 2077, a bipartisan bill designed to place guardrails around the step therapy process in employer-sponsored insurance plans.
- Supported and led patient and provider coalition in support of S. 2554, a bipartisan bill that would prohibit health plans from using gag orders to prohibit patients from making the cheaper choice at the pharmacy counter.
- Secured 12 cosponsors for H.R. 3767 / S. 989, the Ensuring Children’s Access to Specialty Care Act, which would allow pediatric subspecialists such as pediatric rheumatologists to be eligible to apply for loan repayment.

STATE

Challenge

Be the authoritative leader on arthritis with state governments.

Action

Achieved victories that increased patient access to care.

Impact

- Enacted biosimilar substitution bills in 8 states (CT, MI, NH, SD, VT, WY, WV, WI), impacting more than 5.3 million residents with doctor-diagnosed arthritis.
- Enacted step therapy legislation in 2 states (MN, NM), increasing access to care for more than 1.2 million people with arthritis by limiting step therapy protocols and ensuring that patients receive the medications deemed appropriate by their provider.
- Indiana signed a prior authorization bill into law, strengthening the 2017 bill and impacting more than 1.3 million residents with doctor-diagnosed arthritis.
- Enacted legislation prohibiting clawbacks in 11 states (AZ, CO, FL, KY, LA, MD, NY, SD, UT, VA, WV) impacting more than 15,761,000 residents with doctor-diagnosed arthritis.

Action

Translated state victories into action.

Impact

- Unveiled new [State of Your Health](#) website, which includes educational resources meant to empower patients to understand new laws in their states and take action.
- Began piloting campaign in 9 states (CO, IA, IL, IN, MO, NY, OH, TX, WV), along with Washington DC.
- Provided an online State of Your Health advocacy training to over 100 Advocates as part of the Advocate Webinar Series.
- Executed a call to action for partners to promote State of Your Health resources to patients.

Action

Connected Arthritis Foundation Advocates with opportunities to engage locally.

Impact

- Held Capitol Days in 12 states (CA, FL, GA, IA, IL, ME, MN, NY, OH, PA, VA, WA), resulting in over 272 legislative visits.
- Provided in-person and online advocacy training to hundreds of Advocates and Ambassadors across the country.
- Advocates testified 12 times in state legislatures on step therapy reform, biosimilar substitution, and pharmacy benefit manager gag orders.
- Advocates had 4 op-eds placed on step therapy in local papers in ME, MN and NM.