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Legislative Update – Betsy Mitchell, Lobbyist

What is happening in Springfield?

Fall Veto Session

The House and Senate met during the last two weeks in October for the Fall Veto Session. This session is suppose to be reserved for legislators to act on any changes the governor made to bills they passed in the regular spring session. Most of this year's Fall Veto Session focused on these bills plus approximately 50 other pieces of legislation which dealt with ethics, the Monetary Award Program for college students, supplemental appropriations, hunting licenses and a private manager for the Illinois State Lottery. Unfortunately, no legislation was discussed with concerned arthritis or chronic diseases.

The second session of the 96th General Assembly will begin on January 12, 2010 and is scheduled to end in May. There is already much concern and debate over how the next budget will be crafted. Clearly a daunting task lies ahead due the current economy, reduced revenues from taxes, increased needs for human services and public health, and Illinois' credit rating downgraded. For all of these reasons, much speculation exists that debate will continue over a possible income tax increase in Illinois. Stay tuned.

Politically Speaking:

On the political front, we now know who wants to run for political office. The deadline to file candidate petitions with the Illinois State Board of Elections has passed. Fortunately, this year there are several candidates running for office at all levels so we have a choice. Please do your homework when deciding which candidate best represents you. The Illinois primary election is **February 2, 2010** with the general election in November 2010.

To view all legislation go to: <http://www.ilga.gov>

Who do you know? Let AF know who you know in state government.

Do you know your legislators or Governor Quinn? **If you know them or want to get to know them**, please let us know. If you are willing to get to know your legislator, the Arthritis Foundation can help. Contact: Michele Pfeilschifter at

mpfeilschifter@arthritis.org



Join us for an upcoming Jingle Bell Run/Walk

Get in the spirit this holiday season at the Arthritis Foundation's Jingle Bell Run/Walk for Arthritis®. Be one of the thousands of runners and walkers who hit the nation's pavements, pathways and parks this winter to fight arthritis, the nation's most common cause of disability.

Jingle Bell Run/Walk® is a fun and festive way to kick off your holidays by helping others! Wear a holiday themed costume. Tie jingle bells to your shoelaces. Run or walk a 5 kilometer route with your team members and celebrate the season by giving.

Chicago and Suburbs: Register online at www.ChicagoJBR.org.

Greater Illinois: Register online at <http://www.arthritis.org/chapters/greater-illinois/jbr.php>

Attention Parents and Kids with Juvenile Arthritis

Come join us at the **Winter Family Fun Day!**

Saturday January 23, 2010

12pm – 3pm

Fitness Formula Center

1114 West Lake Street, Oak Park, IL

Check in will be from 12pm – 12:30pm.

Bring your appetite! A pizza lunch will be served from 12:30 – 1pm.

Get ready for an afternoon full of activities, which includes rock climbing, swimming and gym activities!

This is a **FREE** family event.

To register call the Arthritis Foundation office at: 312-372-2080 or register online. Go to www.chicagoafkids.org for more information.

Please contact Jazzmin McKay at 312-372-3080 x 13 with any questions.

Save the Date – Upcoming Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC!

Join the Arthritis Foundation and close to 400 advocates in Washington, DC this Spring. The 2010 Advocacy Summit will be held March 1 – 3. To register, please go to: <http://www.arthritis.org/advocacy-summit.php>.

On the website, you will also find information on how to apply for the 2010 Edward M. Kennedy Scholarship – your chance to win a trip to the 2010 Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC!





Tell your story to Members of Congress!!

Even if you can't make the 2010 Advocacy Summit in Washington, DC, we still want to hear from you! Please complete the form on this webpage and submit to the Arthritis Foundation:

Attention: Michele Pfeilschifter
29 E Madison St, Ste 500
Chicago, IL 60602
Fax: (312) 372-2081
Email: mpfeilschifter@arthritis.org

Arthritis Ambassador Program

As a reminder, we are still looking for Arthritis Foundation advocates to become Ambassadors. You can now register to become an Arthritis Ambassador online. Go to: <http://afambassador.kintera.org/>.

Are You An Arthritis Ambassador? It is our goal to have an Ambassador in each Congressional District.

What is an Arthritis Ambassador?

- An Advocacy Network Advocate who will commit to at least one year of building a strong relationship with their Members of Congress and their staff.

Why become an Arthritis Ambassador?

- Ambassadors will have an opportunity to further engage and learn more about public policy and advocacy and become pivotal links to Members of Congress. It is the next critical step in raising awareness with policymakers that arthritis affects 46 million Americans and 300,000 children.
- The chance to connect monthly with others who have an enthusiasm for advocacy and to learn from each other's success.

Until Next Time...

Please contact Michele Pfeilschifter, Advocacy Coordinator for the Arthritis Foundation Chapters in Illinois, at mpfeilschifter@arthritis.org or (312) 372-2080 x 27 if you have any questions or need more information.