



Summer 2009

# Advocacy News

Arthritis Foundation, Inc., New York Chapter • 122 East 42nd Street • New York, New York 10168-1898 • (212) 984-8700

## Highlights from the New York State Partnership

The ongoing partnership between the New York chapters of the Arthritis Foundation and the New York State government has been essential for the expansion and diversification of disease management programs and educational services throughout the state. First established in 2002, the *New York State Capacity Building Partnership* continues to be extremely successful in providing services to thousands of New Yorkers living with arthritis. Thanks to Governor David Paterson, the Chapters have once again received \$246,000 through Executive funding for 2009-2010.



Governor David Paterson

In total, the Chapters have received over 1.7 million dollars in funding from the New York State government since the beginning of this collaboration. This support has allowed the Chapters to conduct more than 1200 disease management courses at more than 650 community sites, reaching over 21,000 New Yorkers. In addition, we have reached more than 8,600 people through public education efforts and trained 1,344 new instructors. These accomplishments are the direct result of this longstanding and successful partnership.

During 2008-2009, the Chapters focused on increasing the number of evidence-based disease management programs throughout the state, reaching out to diverse populations in need, continuing to expand our instructor network and

creating new, innovative and educational opportunities for people living with arthritis. Each Chapter identified specific areas of focus in their given region and directed their resources toward addressing those needs and providing essential services.

**The Long Island Chapter** focused primarily on diversifying their target populations and reaching out to different communities throughout the island. Classes were held in libraries, senior centers, assisted living residences and community halls. Some examples of successful outreach into new areas of service include programs held at Hillside Library in New Hyde Park and Lakeview Library in Rockville Centre. Both libraries held the from the *Arthritis Foundation Tai Chi Program* and the *Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program*. These courses were so well received that they will be continued on an ongoing basis in each of these two communities.

One of the goals identified by the **Northeastern New York Chapter** was to develop partnerships with new facilities in areas where programs had not previously been held. In addition to providing programs for these sites, the Chapter also focused on training new instructors from these communities in order to conduct more ongoing programs in the future. The Chapter also participated in a number of public awareness and educational activities throughout the region. Most notably, the Chapter was featured at a variety of well-attended health fairs.

While the **New York Chapter** continued to run disease management classes throughout the region, the Chapter

also focused on developing innovative educational programs such as the pilot *Yoga for Arthritis* program held in Rockland County and the Kids Family Fun Day at the Castle in Chester, New York. The Chapter also held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual *Instructor Appreciation Celebration* in March, which brought together new and experienced disease management program instructors for an evening of fun and well-deserved recognition.

Serving 31 counties in the Upstate New York area, the **Upstate New York Chapter** works with rural, urban and suburban communities. One of the Chapter's primary goals during this past year was to reach out to underserved populations throughout the region. The Chapter was able to provide programs for a diverse group of people, including those with developmental disabilities and those living in subsidized housing complexes and impoverished neighborhoods. Additionally, the Chapter has reached out to people living with Alzheimer's Disease, Diabetes and those who are blind or visually impaired.

### Action Alert

Take time out to thank our state officials who have helped us provide programs for New Yorkers with arthritis and encourage them to continue to meet the needs of this growing constituency.

For more information on how to contact your elected officials, visit our website at [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org), and click on Advocacy, or you can call the **New York Arthritis Exchange™** at (212) 984-8730, or from the 914 or 845 area codes only, (800) 246-2884.

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# Advocacy and Kids Summit 2009

On March 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of arthritis advocates from across the country, including members of the Chapter's *Arthritis Advocates in Action*, gathered together on Capital Hill for the 11<sup>th</sup> annual *Advocacy & Kids' Summit* in Washington, D.C. This three-day event is the cornerstone of the Arthritis Foundation's federal advocacy efforts. Participants at the Summit visited 80 Senators and 150 U.S. Representatives in order to educate these key leaders about arthritis and inform them that there is more work to be done! Topics included the three national arthritis advocacy priorities: 1) a need for more arthritis research funding at the National Institutes of Health, 2) better prevention funding at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and 3) building Congressional support to pass the Arthritis Prevention, Control and Cure Act. Of note, a key provision of this act encourages more widespread access to pediatric rheumatologists. In addition to these comprehensive lobbying efforts, the Arthritis Foundation also honored Representative Anna Eshoo (California—14<sup>th</sup> district) with the Arthritis Foundation Advocacy Leadership Award and formally recognized the hard work of the Arthritis Ambassadors across the country. With 80 recent cosponsors of the Arthritis Prevention Control and Cure Act (H.R. 1210), the Summit proved to be a great success!

The New York State Chapters were thrilled to have more than 20 participants from around the state participating in the New York delegation. This delegation included 13 members of the New York Chapter's *Arthritis Advocates in Action*. Since a key goal for the Chapter is to continue to grow and expand our network of advocates, we were particularly excited to include first-time advocates Dorothea Jackson, Victoria Rizzo, Kathryn Rodriguez, Jade Sanchez, Ann Shapiro, and Gladys, Rufus and Deborah Toomer. All of the advocates found the Summit to be exciting, educational and eye-opening, and have since signed up to build on their advocacy experience through the *Arthritis Ambassadors* program.

Kathryn Rodriguez, a first-time advocate, describes her experience, "I found the Arthritis Advocacy Summit in Washington, D.C. to be an incredibly rewarding and empowering experience. Everyone was there for one purpose; to make a difference and raise awareness for this particular cause. To see the children and teenagers work just as hard if not harder than the adults visibly touched Members of Congress. I truly believe the entire Advocacy Summit touched us all."

For more information on how to join the Chapter's *Arthritis Advocates in Action*, become an e-advocate or an *Arthritis Ambassador*, please call (212) 984-8730 or visit our website at [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org).

**Over 20 advocates from New York State joined the New York State Delegation in Washington, D.C.**



**A few of our young advocates met Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand of New York State.**



## Hill Briefing Releases New CDC Data on Most Common Causes of Disability; Arthritis Tops the List

Nearly 48 million Americans have a disability, an increase of three million from 1999, and arthritis tops the list of most common causes of disability, according to an article published on April 30th in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). In addition, the number of people who report arthritis as the primary cause of disability has increased by one million. The Arthritis Foundation believes that findings from this study must be taken into consideration as a part of health care reform in this country and arthritis research and prevention efforts strengthened to reduce and minimize the burden of arthritis.

The Arthritis Foundation, joined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) held a special briefing on Capitol Hill to discuss the

new data on the causes of disability which have not been reported in nearly 10 years. Among those testifying were: John H. Klippel, M.D., President and CEO, Arthritis Foundation and Janet Collins, Ph.D., Director, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn).

### MMWR: Key Findings

- Nearly one in five (21.8%) American adults reports having a disability.
- Arthritis remains the most common cause of disability, accounting for nearly 9 million of the 47.5 million people reporting disabilities, or nearly one in every five adults (18%) with a disability.
- Disability is more prevalent among women than men (at all ages): one in four women (24.4%) report having a disability compared with one in five men (19.1%).
- In absolute numbers, there are nearly as many Baby Boomers who report disabilities - 17.3 million - as people 65 and older - 18.1 million.

As a result, aging "Baby Boomers" will likely cause large increases in the number of adults with disabilities over the next 20 years.

The Arthritis Foundation has recommended to Congress that the CDC Arthritis Program be increased by \$10 million for a total appropriation of \$23 million, which amounts to just 50 cents per American with arthritis. The CDC Arthritis Program works with state health departments to increase the availability of evidence based programs to prevent and manage arthritis. Currently, only 12 states receive adequate federal support for arthritis prevention efforts.

Dr. Klippel urged legislators to make this modest investment now; the alternative is to pay more for the burden of arthritis in escalating health care and disability costs and the impact on the American workforce. "We know that workers diagnosed with arthritis leave their jobs earlier than those without arthritis," he said. "Given the recession, any viable health care reform platform must ensure that our valuable workers stay healthy and stay on the job."