



Fall 2008

# Advocacy News

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

## New York City Council Partnership

The New York Chapter is pleased to announce the recent allocation of \$57,500 from the New York City Council. This funding allows the Chapter to continue providing evidence-based disease management programs and educational forums to New Yorkers living with arthritis. Now in its seventh year, the New York City Capacity Building Partnership has proven to be extremely successful in reaching diverse and underserved populations throughout the city. Thanks to the efforts of Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn and Council Members Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Alan J. Gerson, Joel Rivera and David Weprin, the Chapter will be able to further expand our efforts and our reach.

Through our long-standing partnership with the city, the Chapter has reached over 3,100 New Yorkers in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan and Queens. By providing evidence-based disease management programs such as the *Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program* and *Tai Chi from the Arthritis Foundation*, the Chapter empowers New Yorkers with the skills and tools to better manage their arthritis. The public education forums further this goal by giving community members the opportunity to hear about the latest advances in research and arthritis treatments from leading medical professionals in the field.

By raising awareness about arthritis throughout the city, this collaboration strengthens community-ties and helps to build new, vital relationships. Programs are held at neighborhood sites such as senior centers and residences, libraries, and places of worship. Over the past few years, the Chapter has been especially pleased to provide programs and materials in multiple languages in order to best serve the needs of the diverse populations that we reach.

Statistically analyzed pre and post course questionnaires illustrate the impact of the Chapter's evidence-based disease management programs. Results from class participants indicate vast improvements in pain management, increased confidence in symptom management and a clear understanding of the benefits of exercise. As in previous years, participants stated that they intend to make key, lifestyle changes as a result of course participation.

### Action Alert

The following New York City Council members have been instrumental in securing funding for the Chapter's New York City Capacity Building Partnership. In difficult economic times, the Chapter is especially grateful to these individuals. Please take time to thank them for their efforts and allowing the Chapter to continue providing beneficial services to New Yorkers living with arthritis.



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*If there are currently no arthritis disease management programs or forums in your neighborhood, contact your local council member and request that these services be offered in your area.*

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# New York State Grant Outcomes Continue to Show Great Improvements!

During the 2008 grant year of the New York State Capacity Building Partnership, the four New York State Chapters of the Arthritis Foundation offered 268 disease management courses to 2,447 New York residents living with arthritis. As in previous years, the current outcomes evaluation results are impressive! Over 500 individuals completed both baseline and post-test questionnaires and reported positive changes in health status, use of pain management techniques and exercises, arthritis symptoms, levels of depression, self-efficacy (ability to use self-care techniques), and health care utilization. **Once again, the vast majority of course participants felt the course exceeded their expectations and intended to make changes in their arthritis management as a result of taking the course.**

One new and important addition to the New York State health outcomes evaluation is the use of data from all individuals who completed either a baseline *or* a post-test questionnaire. In past years, the evaluation included only data from class participants who completed both questionnaires, which left out a large portion of information about the population reached! According to Dr. Victoria Rizzo, Assistant Professor and Hartford Geriatric Social Work Faculty Scholar at Columbia University and chief evaluator of this project, "By including all of this additional information, we can gain a better understanding of the differences and similarities between course completers and non-completers. This new data may reveal significant characteristics about program non-completers and inform the further development of strategies to more successfully recruit and retain the harder to reach underserved arthritis populations." In addition, these details may also inform the development of an outreach and care coordination program that will build our capacity to actively engage the hard to reach, isolated individuals who are not currently participating in these programs. With the 2009 allocation of \$346,000 in funding from both the Executive and Legislative budget, combined, the Chapters intend to further expand our reach into this population.

## Arthritis Advocates in Action Training Session VIII

This fall, don't miss your opportunity to be part of the Chapter's 8<sup>th</sup> *Advocates in Action* training session! This program will help participants develop new advocacy strategies for building successful collaborations at the city, state and federal levels. Topics will include an overview of the Chapter's recent advocacy successes and detailed highlights of the Chapter's Statewide Capacity Building Partnership. In addition, participants will have a chance to learn about some of the new advocacy programs sponsored by the National office of the Arthritis Foundation such as the *Arthritis Ambassador Program* and the *E-Advocacy Network*. For more information about the training, please contact Michele Greco at 212-984-8712 or [mgreco@arthritis.org](mailto:mgreco@arthritis.org).

## Join the National Arthritis E-Advocacy Network

Forty-six million Americans, including 300,000 children, suffer from some form of arthritis. As the most common cause of disability in the U.S., arthritis has a significant impact on our nation's economy. Yet, despite years of research and treatment advances, there is still no cure for this painful and debilitating disease.

Join the Arthritis Foundation's National E-Advocacy Network and let Congress know more needs to be done for people with arthritis—more research, more public education and more doctors for kids with arthritis. As an E-Advocate, you'll receive exclusive access to Arthritis Agenda, AF's online grassroots newsletter, delivered to your inbox so it's ready when you are. You'll also gain important insights and advocacy tools to help you:

- Arm yourself with important information and updates on arthritis legislation
- Take critical action with AF's special Action Alerts
- Lend your voice to our collective strength to let Congress know it's time to cure and find better treatments and strategies for arthritis.

**Sign-up today, and together we'll work to make arthritis history!**

To become an E-Advocate, complete the form online at: <http://capwiz.com/arthritis/mlm/signup/>

## The CDC Arthritis Program Funds Fewer States

Since 1999, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have been funding arthritis programs at state health departments throughout the country. Over the past five years, 36 states received CDC funding annually. This funding has been used to increase public awareness of the burden of arthritis and increase the availability of interventions that have been proven to improve the quality of life and health care of people with arthritis.

In the spring of 2007, the CDC brought together a panel of national experts to advise on future directions for arthritis programming. This collaboration led to significant changes in the program. Most notably, the committee recommended that states receive larger grants to be more effective. As a result, without increased government funding for fiscal year 2009, beginning in July 2008, only 12 states received these larger federal CDC arthritis grants.

New York State was not one of the states chosen to receive this CDC funding through the renewal process. Although our state, among others, qualified for funding, the CDC arthritis program does not have enough funding to award the grant. Without this grant, the people with arthritis in New York will have diminished access to evidence based public health strategies to help people with arthritis manage their disease. To help address the devastating burden of arthritis and increase the number of states that receive funding for arthritis related programs, the Arthritis Foundation and other grassroots advocates are continuing to urge Congress to increase the investment in CDC's arthritis program.

DOUBLETREE HOTEL - ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

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