



Summer  
2008

# 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 Grant

Since 2002, the New York State government has generously supported the New York chapters of the Arthritis Foundation in an effort to provide disease management and public education programs to residents throughout the state. For 2008-2009, the Chapters have once again received \$346,000 in funding from both the Executive and Legislative budget, combined. Thanks to Governor David Patterson and Senator Kemp Hannon, champions for our cause, the Chapters will continue conducting evidence-based programs and providing public education activities, such as physician-led forums and children's programs, in many diverse and underserved regions and communities statewide.

In total, the Chapters have received \$1,380,000 in funding. This ongoing partnership has allowed the Chapters to hold 913 disease management courses at more than 500 community sites, reaching nearly 16,000 New Yorkers. In addition, the Chapters have reached over 3,900 people through public education efforts and trained 1,145 instructors. These impressive accomplishments could not have been achieved without the help of this critical partnership!

Here are some 2007-2008 highlights from the four Chapters around the state:

### Long Island Chapter

After taking one of the New York State-funded disease management courses offered by the Long Island Chapter, one participant exclaimed, "Everyday is a struggle for me, but the Arthritis Foundation has helped me in so many ways. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You give me hope and inspiration." A director of one of the sites which holds state-funded classes



Governor David Patterson



Senator Kemp Hannon

remarked, "Thank you for the generous effort you made in obtaining the grant that is allowing our residents to participate in the eight free *Tai Chi from the Arthritis Foundation* classes. So far it has done wonders not only for their bodies but for their spirits as well."

### Northeastern New York Chapter

The Northeastern New York Chapter focused on conducting disease management programs at new facilities throughout the region. The Chapter was also extremely active in health fairs in the area, giving them the opportunity to be visible to over 1,500 people in the community. Their public education seminars were held in Albany, Fulton, Saratoga and Schenectady and included topics such as Fibromyalgia, Juvenile Arthritis, Psoriatic Arthritis and Osteoarthritis.

### New York Chapter

Some of the most exciting additions to the New York Chapter's programming this year were made possible by the New York State partnership. Children's programs included: the Chapter's first *Family Day* for children with arthritis and their families, held in Orange County, and our second annual *Afternoon at Chelsea Piers* event in Manhattan. Both of these events were extremely successful and have sparked excitement for the Chapter to hold more children's events in the future. The Chapter

also held its first *Yoga for Arthritis* program this past winter. This program was such a hit, that two additional *Yoga* classes began in the spring—and are filled to capacity! The Chapter also held its first *Instructor Appreciation Celebration* in March. This event recognized all of the hard work demonstrated by our ever-expanding network of dedicated instructors.

### Upstate New York Chapter

The program manager of this Chapter, Joanne Insull, says it best: "Here in Upstate New York we have been able to run programs in almost all of the thirty one counties we serve. This grant has given us the opportunity to start programs in some of the very rural areas in our region and we have also been able to reach out to inner-cities and to immigrant populations. Program participants continue to tell us that the information that they have learned is extremely valuable. The communities that we serve are extremely pleased with the variety of classes offered as well as the professionalism of all of our instructors."

## 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

On February 25-27<sup>th</sup>, members of the Chapter's *Arthritis Advocates in Action* joined 400 other arthritis advocates from around the country at the **10<sup>th</sup> annual Advocacy and Kids' Summit** in Washington, DC.

This three-day summit brought together advocates from across the country to meet with their Members of Congress and educate them about arthritis and its devastating effects. During the summit, participants were given an introduction to how Congress works and learned about the Arthritis Foundation's Advocacy Priorities for 2008 (see below). Over 250 meetings with Members of Congress were held and included information about the importance of passing the *Arthritis Prevention, Control and Cure Act* in 2008 and the critical need for investing in arthritis research and disease management programs for people living with arthritis throughout the country.

This year's *Summit* was a great success! Due to the hard work of the advocates in DC, seven additional Senators and Representatives co-sponsored the arthritis bill just weeks after the *Summit*. For more information on the *Summit* or to become an advocate, please visit [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org) or contact the New York Arthritis Exchange at 212-984-8730, or from the 914 or 845 area codes only, 800-246-2884.

**Arthritis Foundation Advocacy Priorities for 2008**

- Encourage Congress to act on and pass the *Arthritis Prevention, Control and Cure Act* in 2008. This landmark legislation will: strengthen arthritis public health initiatives, expand the reach of evidence-based disease management programs and address the country's severe shortage of pediatric rheumatologists.
- Request that Congress increase funding by \$1.9 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This funding would help to increase research necessary for finding improved treatments and a potential cure for arthritis.
- Urge Congress to make a critical investment of \$23 million dollars in the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) program, which provides evidence-based arthritis disease management courses throughout the country.



**Over twenty advocates from New York State joined the New York Delegation in Washington, DC.**

## 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.

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/>

## Become an Arthritis Foundation Ambassador Today!

The National office of the Arthritis Foundation has created the *Arthritis Foundation Ambassador Program* so that people with arthritis, and those caring for them, can lend their voices and their commitment to advocate for Congressional attention for arthritis.

### An Arthritis Ambassador:

- Represents his/her Congressional district as a special envoy of the Arthritis Foundation
- Educates community leaders and elected officials about the impact of arthritis
- Participates in awareness-raising events and opportunities

### What is expected of an Arthritis Ambassador?

- Arthritis Ambassadors are volunteers who commit at least two hours each month to building strong relationships with their Members of Congress.
- Ambassadors receive exclusive monthly briefings on key policy issues. Armed with this information, Ambassadors are assigned an advocacy task each month, such as:
  - Contacting Members of Congress concerning the legislative priorities of the Arthritis Foundation
  - Promoting Arthritis Foundation public policy priorities at local chapter events such as the Arthritis Walk
  - Recruiting new and active advocates in key congressional districts
  - Attending local Town Hall Meetings sponsored by a Member of Congress
  - Inviting and encouraging Members of Congress to participate in AF local events

You can make a difference in the quest for a cure. For more information about the *Arthritis Ambassador Program*, contact the Arthritis Foundation's Public Policy and Advocacy Department at [advocacy@arthritis.org](mailto:advocacy@arthritis.org) or by calling 202-887-1700. More information can also be found on our website at: [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)