

JOINT *Matters*



Gearing Up for PIKASO

The Arthritis Foundation, along with experts in clinical practice and research, is preparing to launch the Post-Injury Knee Arthritis Severity Outcomes (PIKASO) clinical trial at the end of this year. The phase II study will be the first trial to test if metformin, a drug widely used for managing Type 2 diabetes, can prevent osteoarthritis progression in people at elevated risk of the disease after major knee injury compared to placebo.

The project is a collaborative effort of the top arthritis investigators and nine research institutions, including Cleveland Clinic, Emory University, Hospital for Special Surgery, Mass General Brigham, The Ohio State University, the University of Iowa, the University of Kentucky, the University of Nebraska and the University of North Carolina, who make up the Foundation's Osteoarthritis Clinical Trials Network (OA-CTN).

"Through our multi-institutional collaboration, we will not just evaluate the effect of metformin in pain reduction, but we will also measure changes in joint structure using advanced imaging techniques and functional improvements using cutting-edge biomechanics measurements," says David Felson, MD, MPH, the Chair of the

Arthritis Foundation's OA-CTN and professor at Boston University.

Osteoarthritis generally advances more slowly than the timeframe typically allowed for clinical trials, which has been a source of frustration for scientists. However, some vulnerable patients do show osteoarthritis symptoms within a two- to five-year window after a major joint injury. The Arthritis Foundation, recognizing this important detail, launched the FastOA initiative to find specific individuals who could be studied in clinical trials. For PIKASO, this cohort was identified to be those who are likely to develop post-traumatic osteoarthritis.

"The Arthritis Foundation has invested much thought, time and resources into bringing the PIKASO project to fruition," says Peggy Crow, MD, Arthritis Foundation's Medical Science Advisory Committee chair and physician-in-chief emeritus at Hospital for Special Surgery. "We now eagerly look forward to the next stage of PIKASO, that is, executing a clinical trial that meets the highest standards of quality, ethics and integrity."

For more information on the Foundation's efforts in pushing back against osteoarthritis, [see here](#).

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Overcoming Barriers to Knee Surgery

Studies indicate that African American men tend to have a higher consideration of risks and a lower perception of the benefits of knee replacements. With a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) award from the Arthritis Foundation, John FitzGerald, MD, PhD, MBA, clinical professor of rheumatology at the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, has partnered with the creators of the WiserCare program to break down the barriers to getting knee replacement surgery.

The educational decision aid works through the electronic medical record system to provide accurate information on the surgical procedure's expectations and risks. For instance, if an X-ray shows a patient might benefit from joint replacement, WiserCare will automatically send a message prompting the provider to order one. WiserCare also includes data about procedure outcomes that providers can share with their patients. Thus, patients can make more informed decisions about their treatment options.

"We're trying to provide more information to reduce some of the uncertainty and provide a little motivation to explore joint replacement further," Dr. FitzGerald says.

The \$50,000 DEI award will provide Dr. FitzGerald with funding for two years.

Interested in applying for a DEI award? Visit our [Workforce DEI](#) page to get information on our initiatives, requests for proposals and deadlines.



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School of Medicine

ADVOCACY UPDATE

Ideal Model of Care Webpage Is Now Live

In an effort to address the care gaps and resources needed for patients living with arthritis, the Foundation has launched the "[Ideal Model of Care](#)" webpage. The site includes information on data collection, expert interviews and policy solutions.

Arthritis Drugs Included in Medicare Drug Negotiation List

Enbrel and *Stelara* were included in the initial list of 10 drugs the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) selected for the first round of negotiations. The ability for CMS to negotiate drug prices was authorized in the Inflation Reduction Act last year. The Arthritis Foundation is focusing our advocacy efforts on ensuring any methodology to set a maximum fair price is patient-centered. CMS announced patient stakeholder meetings in the fall in addition to a public comment period for patients (*Enbrel*, Oct 31; *Stelara*, Nov 14). We have disseminated information to our advocates and will provide a training session for Medicare beneficiaries who wish to participate. We will also continue our engagement with CMS, ensuring the patient's perspective is well represented in their questions, such as available therapeutic alternatives.

Other News

The 2023 Arthritis Foundation Advocacy Summit took place between September 10 and 12. Attendees met with members of Congress on Capitol Hill and shared their arthritis stories so that legislators can better understand how people affected by this disease can be helped. For highlights from the conference, please [click here](#).

You can become an arthritis advocate too. Help shift the policy and public perception that affects those living with arthritis.





Announcements

2023 Ankle Arthritis Awards

The Arthritis Foundation and the [American Orthopaedic Foot & Ankle Society \(AOFAS\)](#) presented three awards to support innovative clinical research that advances knowledge toward treatments to stop or slow ankle osteoarthritis. The goal of this funding is to support research that will build the data needed to secure funding from large institutional sources. This year's awardees are Donald Anderson, PhD, professor of orthopedics and rehabilitation at the University of Iowa; Constantine Demetracopoulos, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at Hospital for Special Surgery; and Kenneth Hunt, MD, associate professor and director of Foot & Ankle Orthopedics at the University of Colorado. See the joint press release [here](#).



Preview: 2024 FastOA Initiative, Hip Cohorts

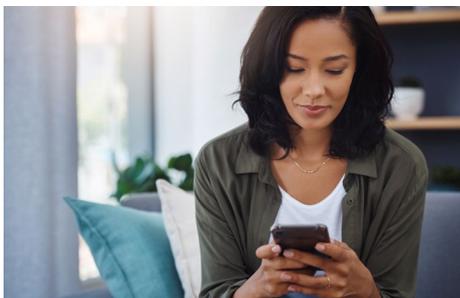
Consistent with its mission, the Arthritis Foundation aims to support research that will improve the lives of people living with arthritis by accelerating the development of new treatments. Identifying patient groups with clearly defined clinical features and at high risk for developing osteoarthritis over a relatively short time frame can be a resource for successful future clinical trials. This request for proposals invites applications that seek to identify and define patient populations with risk of "FastOA" of the hip. Members of FastOA cohorts determined from these studies may be candidates for interventional clinical trials. This request for proposals invites applications for a budget of up to \$150,000 for one year.

The funding for this initiative is provided through the Arthritis Foundation FastOA initiative and OA-CTN.



2023 Clinical Rheumatology Fellowships

The Arthritis Foundation has dedicated three clinical rheumatology fellowship awards with the dual goal of increasing the number of rheumatologists in the health care workforce and supporting physicians who are committed to providing rheumatology care to in-need populations. The roster of awardees includes Duke University School of Medicine, Seattle Children's Hospital and The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital. Please visit our [fellowships page](#) for more information about our awardees and request for proposals.



A Lupus App for Patients

With funding from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) and advisory support from the Arthritis Foundation, among other organizations, Jasvinder Singh, MD, MPH, professor of medicine and epidemiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, has successfully launched the "ManageMyLupus" app for people with lupus. This tool was created for patients based on their needs, preferences and knowledge gaps. It contains information on lupus treatment and management. The free app is available in English and Spanish and can be downloaded on an Android phone at the Play Store and on an iPhone at the App Store.



COMMUNITY IN ACTION

Make an impact! Join the Arthritis Foundation's signature events happening at a location near you.

Jingle Bell Run Join us as we support the nearly 60 million Americans living with arthritis at the most festive holiday fundraising run around! You and your hospital or practice can get involved in so many ways! Register your hospital, practice, or department as a team (and encourage your patients to join). You don't want to miss out.

To learn more about our events and participate, visit arthritis.org/events.



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Pedaling to Help Cure Arthritis

Each year, the Arthritis Foundation proudly hosts the California Coast Classic (CCC) Bike Tour, inviting riders on a 525-mile, eight-day bike event along the woods, wineries and waves studding Highway 1. A familiar face among the yearly participants is Pete "Cap'n" Staylor, an avid cyclist and volunteer for the CCC. This year will be his 20th time participating in the annual event. Despite living with osteoarthritis in both knees, he excitedly traverses the Golden Coast each year on his electric bike, a testament to his passion for cycling and bringing attention to the degenerative disease.



"It's just a lot of fun with a lot of great people, and it's a really great cause," says Pete. "We're riding to raise funds and awareness for the Arthritis Foundation, to get out of our comfort zone and to do something special like this. That's what the California Coast Classic is about."

Like Pete, at least 40% of the CCC riders either have arthritis or are riding in support of a loved one with a form of arthritis. The money raised helps fund novel treatments and research. Pete's team, Billy, has already raised more than \$54,000 this year.

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— Pete "Cap'n" Staylor,
California Coast Classic rider
and volunteer

The CCC is sponsored by Amgen. To learn more about participating or volunteering, please [visit here](#).

