

NEWS

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ACR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES MAJOR FUNDS RAISED FOR INNOVATIVE RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS RESEARCH

ATLANTA – The American College of Rheumatology Research and Education Foundation (REF) today announced that it has successfully raised more than \$18 million for innovative rheumatoid arthritis research. In March 2006, the REF launched *Within Our Reach: Finding a Cure for Rheumatoid Arthritis*, a national, multi-year campaign with a goal to raise a minimum of \$30 million, and in less than two years, the campaign has exceeded the halfway mark.

Within Our Reach is the largest private fundraising campaign in the REF's history. Ninety-two percent of the \$30 million goal will be derive from gifts of \$100,000 or more. The campaign has received tremendous support from the pharmaceutical industry, biotech companies, the rheumatology community and patients towards accelerating innovative research focused specifically on rheumatoid arthritis.

"Despite its prevalence in the population, rheumatoid arthritis typically receives disproportionately less research funding from federal sources than do other autoimmune diseases, and most of that limited funding is currently focused on treatment and management of the disease," says Dr. James R. O'Dell, President of the REF. "The REF believes that more funding needs to be directed towards the kind of RA research that goes beyond treatment only - the kind of RA research that seeks to find a cure through better understanding of the causes of and preventions for this devastating disease."

Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, one of three Pinnacle donors, became involved early in the campaign. "While much progress has been made in the treatment of people with rheumatoid arthritis, there is still a great deal of research to be done to help healthcare professionals better manage and, perhaps one day, even cure the disease," said Michael Corbo, vice president and development team lead, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company. "Bristol-Myers Squibb is proud to be involved with this innovative research campaign that supports our mission of extending and enhancing human life."

"Significant advancements in managing and treating RA have been made, but the underlying causes of the disease remain unknown," continues Corbo. "The Within Our Reach campaign supports research that seeks to identify the cause of RA, which will help us better treat people afflicted by the disease."

Abbott Laboratories, also a Pinnacle donor of the campaign, is committed to doing their part to meet the health needs of people around the world.

"The past few years have seen tremendous advances in RA treatment, and yet clearly there is even more to learn. A better scientific understanding of RA could help us treat those patients who are still in pain despite the best treatments. It could also enable us to diagnose or even predict new cases of RA so we can stop the disease before

it starts. Abbott is committed to helping researchers better understand the underlying mechanism of RA - research that offers immense potential to benefit patients in terms of novel treatment approaches or even a cure," says Rebecca S. Hoffman, MD, divisional vice president of the Immunology Development at Abbott.

The American College of Rheumatology has also made a major investment in the campaign and stepped forward with the first Pinnacle level commitment at the early stages of the campaign.

In July, the Foundation awarded the first-round of grant funding, totaling \$6 million, to 15 experienced scientific investigators from leading institutions across the country. Another \$6 million is expected to be awarded in July 2008 to a new crop of researchers who are submitting applications now.

To learn more about rheumatoid arthritis and *Within Our Reach*, please visit www.WithinOurReach.info.

About the ACR Research and Education Foundation

The ACR Research and Education Foundation was established in 1985 as a 501(c)(3) with a mission to improve patients' lives through support of research and training that advances the prevention, treatment and cure of rheumatic diseases. Since its founding, the REF has promoted and advanced the field of rheumatology by funding research, training and education opportunities for clinicians, students, health professionals, researchers and academic institutions. On average, 89 cents of every dollar donated to the REF is used to fund its extensive award and grant program.

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