

NEWS

Contact:

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ACR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FOUNDATION TAPS COMMUNITY AND INDUSTRY TO RAISE MAJOR FUNDS TO COMBAT NEGATIVE FUNDING TREND

ATLANTA – The American College of Rheumatology Research and Education Foundation announced today that it has successfully raised more than \$24 million for innovative rheumatoid arthritis research from the community-at-large and from the pharmaceutical and biotech industries.

Rheumatoid arthritis affects an estimated 1.3 million Americans, yet funding to find new treatments and ultimately a cure remains significantly low compared to other autoimmune diseases, and funds continue to decline.

“The issue of declining funds for rheumatology research was brought to our attention about five years ago,” says Leslie J. Crofford, MD, president of the REF. “We knew it was time to act, so we called on the community and our friends in the industry to assist in combating this negative trend.”

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 a little over two years, the campaign has raised 78% of its goal.

Abbott, one of the four Pinnacle donors, became involved early in the campaign. "Medical research has significantly advanced rheumatoid arthritis treatment. Because of new treatments, many people with RA are living pain-free, productive lives and feeling better than we could have imagined just a decade ago. Our hope is that through the continued advancement of medical science there will be a way to prevent this debilitating disease one day," said Rebecca S. Hoffman, MD, divisional vice president of Immunology Development at Abbott.

Michael Corbo, vice president and development team lead, Bristol-Myers Squibb Company echoes this sentiment. He said, “significant progress has been made in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, yet there is still much to be done in the fight to begin to identify a cure for this disease which affects so many. The success of the Within Our Reach campaign and the amount raised to date is a promising step towards this goal. Bristol-Myers Squibb is extremely proud to be involved in this innovative research campaign that supports our mission of extending and enhancing human life.”

UCB, a biopharmaceutical company with U.S. operations in Atlanta, is another Pinnacle donor who got involved for similar reasons. “As a patient-centric company, we feel it is important to advance the scientific and research knowledge about rheumatoid arthritis,” said David Robinson, vice president and general manager of UCB’s Inflammation Business Unit. “UCB is committed to improving the treatment of RA and this campaign

by the REF is an excellent opportunity to advance the treatment options and give patients and physicians the tools they need to combat this debilitating disease.”

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.

“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 so I am delighted to share that we have funded 30 grants amounting to \$12 million thus far, and we will continue to fund grants annually until the entire \$30 million has been spent,” said Dr. Crofford.

To learn more about *Within Our Reach* and the research being funded, 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, 90 cents of every dollar donated to the REF is used to fund its extensive award and grant program.

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