

June 12, 2015

The Honorable Fred Upton
2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette
2368 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Upton and Congresswoman DeGette:

On behalf of the more than 50 million adults and 300,000 children who suffer from doctor-diagnosed arthritis, the Arthritis Foundation offers its support for H.R. 6, the 21st Century Cures Act, and thanks you for your leadership in passing this landmark legislation out of the Energy and Commerce Committee. This bill has the potential to greatly increase the availability of treatments for people with arthritis and accelerate the path to a cure for the disease.

As you know, arthritis is a debilitating disease with no cure, and for many forms of the disease, no effective therapeutic treatments. Even biologic medications – which have revolutionized the treatment of people with auto-immune forms of arthritis like rheumatoid arthritis – can have severe side effects and aren't responsive in everyone. 21st Century Cures can help accelerate the availability of innovative treatments for people suffering from arthritis by enhancing and streamlining the research and drug approval process, and focusing on delivering those treatments to people who need them.

We particularly appreciate your inclusion of provisions that would ensure adequate representation of children in clinical research, enhance patient-focused drug development, facilitate more open communication on the off-label uses of drugs, enhance data sharing, and make it easier for Medicare beneficiaries to access treatments. We also thank you for including funding for the National Institutes of Health and the Federal Drug Administration to carry out these important tasks, a critical component to achieving the goals set forth in the bill.

Thank you again for your leadership on the 21st Century Cures Act, and we look forward to working with you to pass this important legislation into law. If you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me, or Sandie Preiss, the Foundation's Vice President of Advocacy and Access, at 202-887-2910 or spreiss@arthritis.org.

Sincerely,



Ann Palmer
President and CEO
Arthritis Foundation