



PRESS RELEASE

Organizations are encouraged to download and tailor the following press release to share with your local media outlets via email. Placeholders are included for additional information from your organization.



[Sample Press Release](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: *[Insert Name]*
[Insert Email]
[Insert Phone Number]

[Insert Organization Name] Participates in First Annual Rheumatic Disease Awareness Month Nation's Leading Cause of Disability in the Spotlight this September

CITY, STATE (DATE) – *[Insert Organization Name]* is helping raise awareness about rheumatic diseases in *[Insert City or State]* this September during the first annual Rheumatic Disease Awareness Month, sponsored by the [American College of Rheumatology](#) (ACR) and its national public awareness campaign, [Simple Tasks](#).

More than 52.5 million Americans – young and old – live with painful, debilitating, and life-threatening rheumatic diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis (RA), gout, lupus, Sjögren's syndrome, ankylosing spondylitis, and juvenile idiopathic arthritis. Rheumatic diseases are the nation's leading cause of disability, generating more than \$128 billion in health costs each year. These diseases often strike individuals in the prime of their lives and can lead to long-term disability and early death if not treated early and effectively.

Because rheumatic disease symptoms can be difficult to pinpoint and are sometimes dismissed as merely the aches and pains of getting older, people living with these diseases may go years before seeking treatment or receiving a correct diagnosis. Although there is no cure for rheumatic disease, early intervention by a trained rheumatologist can help patients manage symptoms and maintain a normal quality of life.

Parents of young children should also be wary of any inexplicable joint pain. An estimated 300,000 children live with painful juvenile idiopathic arthritis, which can lead to physical disability, blindness, and other complications if not treated early.

Symptoms of rheumatic disease vary by person and condition but may include:

- Joint or muscle pain, inflammation, swelling, redness, or stiffness;
- Eye irritation and inflammation;
- General fatigue, malaise, and fevers;
- Hair loss;
- Dry eyes or mouth;
- Chest pain; and
- Seizures or stroke.

(continued next page)



PRESS RELEASE *continued*

[Optional: Insert a paragraph about specific types of patients or diseases your organization supports.]

"No one should have to live with chronic, persistent, and mysterious pain," said Dr. Joan Von Feldt, MD, MEd, president of the American College of Rheumatology (ACR). "Seeing a rheumatologist within the first weeks and months of disease onset – what rheumatologists call the 'window of opportunity' – can dramatically improve long-term outcomes for patients, so it is important to know what symptoms to look for and when to ask for a referral to a trained specialist."

Once diagnosed, people living with rheumatic diseases can face significant healthcare obstacles, including a shortage of trained rheumatologists to treat their conditions and expensive co-pays for specialty therapies.

"Unfortunately, too many of our patients struggle to access and afford effective care and treatments for their rheumatic diseases," said Dr. Von Feldt. "Therefore, in addition to increasing awareness about symptoms and treatment options, Rheumatic Disease Awareness Month is also an opportunity to advance the health and well-being of those living with rheumatic disease by advocating for healthcare policies that help patients access safe, affordable, and effective healthcare."

Rheumatic Disease Awareness Month is sponsored by Simple Tasks, a national public awareness campaign from the American College of Rheumatology (ACR). People who are interested in learning more about rheumatic diseases and Rheumatic Disease Awareness Month activities are encouraged to visit the Simple Tasks website at www.SimpleTasks.org.



About *[Insert your organization's boilerplate.]*

About the American College of Rheumatology

The American College of Rheumatology is an international medical society representing more than 9,400 rheumatologists and rheumatology health professionals with a mission to Advance Rheumatology! In doing so, the ACR offers education, research, advocacy, and practice management support to help its members continue their innovative work and provide quality patient care. Rheumatologists are experts in the diagnosis, management, and treatment of more than 100 different types of arthritis and rheumatic diseases.

participate.

SPONDYLITIS
LUPUS
GOUT
JIA
Sjögren's
OSTEOARTHRITIS
temporal arteritis
Behçet's Disease