Prevalence and Impact of Rheumatic Disease

- Rheumatic diseases are the leading cause of disability in America.
- More than 54 million Americans—one in four Americans—live with some form of rheumatic disease.\(^1\)
- Eleven million Americans live with inflammatory rheumatic diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis (RA), gout and lupus.
- 300,000 children live with some form of rheumatic disease.\(^2\)
- Research shows that rheumatic disease can shorten a lifespan by up to 15 years.

Cost of Rheumatic Disease

- Rheumatic diseases cost the U.S. healthcare system and economy an estimated $128 billion annually.
- The cost of rheumatic disease is expected to rise as the population ages.\(^3\)
- Rheumatic diseases are responsible for approximately $80 billion in annual medical expenditures.\(^3\)
- Rheumatic diseases are responsible for approximately $47 billion in annual indirect costs, such as lost earnings.\(^3\)
- It is not uncommon for insured patients to pay $2,700 or more in annual co-pays for biologic therapies.\(^4\)

Healthcare Challenges for People Living with Rheumatic Diseases

- Due to lack of understanding about rheumatic disease and the complex and varied symptoms, many people living with rheumatic diseases can go years before seeking treatment or receiving a correct diagnosis for their disease.
- Once diagnosed, many patients struggle to access and afford effective care and treatments for their rheumatic diseases.
- Medical research funding for rheumatic disease—our best hope for new treatments and, ultimately, cures—lags far behind other diseases and conditions.
- Due to the current shortage of specialists trained to provide rheumatology care, including pediatric rheumatologists, many patients experience long wait or travel times to see a rheumatologist.
  - According to the American College of Rheumatology’s 2015 workforce study:\(^5\)
    - Demand for adult arthritis care will exceed supply by 138 percent in 2030.
    - Demand for pediatric arthritis care will exceed supply by 61 percent in 2030.
    - 3,845 adult rheumatologists will be needed in addition to the projected workforce to meet patient demand in the U.S. in 2025.
- Exorbitant patient co-pays for specialty therapies, along with prior authorization, step therapy and “fail-first” requirements from insurers, threaten patients’ ability to access high-quality rheumatic disease care.