



ARTHRITIS AWARENESS MONTH ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

WE'RE CALLING ON YOU

September is **Arthritis Awareness Month** and we need your help! We want to raise awareness of arthritis, the Arthritis Society and bring attention to our policy recommendations.

Our goal is to raise 1 million dollars and 1 million voices for the 6 million Canadians living with arthritis. Speak up and get involved! This **toolkit** provides an overview of the Arthritis Society's key policy recommendations and how you can help make arthritis a priority during Arthritis Awareness Month. You can also help raise vital funds through participating in [Move Your Way](#).

OUR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Develop and implement a coordinated plan to address COVID-related backlog of joint replacement surgeries**

Arthritis is the leading cause of joint replacement, including over 99% of knee replacements and over 80% of hip replacements. Even before COVID-19 there were already significant challenges meeting the recommended wait times. COVID-19 exacerbated this issue through the delay or cancellation of tens of thousands of surgeries across Canada. Federal and provincial governments must act now to address the enormous backlog of joint replacement surgeries.

- **Address drug access issues, including through implementation of a national pharmacare program**

Access to medications is critical to people living with arthritis. A national pharmacare program that aims to achieve both access and affordability – with a primary aim to improve the health of Canadians – would ensure that all Canadians have equitable access to the medicines they need, regardless of employment status or which province they reside.

- **Invest in research and support health charities**

COVID-19 substantially impacted Canadian scientists, researchers, and hospital-based research institutions, limiting non-COVID research and causing a massive and immediate funding crunch. Many health charities that support research and provide programs and services to thousands of Canadians are also facing significant financial hardship, up to a 50% drop in revenue compared to this time last year and are struggling to maintain current programs. To ensure health charities can continue to fund research and provide valuable programs it is vital that the federal government provide financial support to Canadian health charities.



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HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Take action

Send a [letter](#) to elected representatives on our issues and share our advocacy website with all your networks. There is also the option to send a [letter](#) to your community newspaper.

2. Book a meeting with your MP, MPP/MLA/MNA

Find your MP by entering your postal code at <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Members/en> and for provincial representatives search on your provincial legislative website. Email or call to ask for a meeting to talk about arthritis, how it impacts you and what the government can do to help. Keep us informed of the great work you are doing by copying advocacy@arthritis.ca in the email address line! If you book a meeting, share our recommendations. Reach out to us if you would like assistance. We're here to help!

3. Arthritis Facts and Figures

You can find useful arthritis stats to use in your local advocacy efforts at arthritis.ca/facts

4. Post and share on social media

Follow us on Twitter [@ArthritisSoc](https://twitter.com/ArthritisSoc) and Facebook [ArthritisSociety](https://www.facebook.com/ArthritisSociety), share our posts and tag us in your posts. Here are some suggested messages, hashtags and handles for you to post, retweet or make your own:

September is Arthritis Awareness Month. This is our month! Join me in the movement to raise \$1 million and 1 million voices for the 6 million Canadians with arthritis. Together we can empower people to say, "Arthritis won't stop me." #1for6million

#Wait times for surgery are only getting longer. Most joint replacements are for #arthritis. Govts must take action to reduce wait times so people do not live with unnecessary pain. www.arthritis.ca/takeaction #1for6million

Remember to mention or tag your elected representatives when advocating on social media.

5. Become a volunteer

Passionate about arthritis issues and want to do more? Get in touch with us to become an advocacy volunteer at arthritis.ca/volunteer

Questions: Please feel free to contact us directly! Email Kelly Gorman kgorman@arthritis.ca or Joanne Di Nardo jdinardo@arthritis.ca or call 416-979-7228 x3383.