

for IA patients with a specific focus on the access to care element of MOCs for IA patients to demonstrate the benefits of implementing MOCs and explore their efficiency.

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Advocating for Change

By Kelly Lendvoy; and Janet Yale

This special issue of *The Canadian Rheumatology Association Journal* has been dedicated to highlighting the many projects and initiatives that have been undertaken by the Arthritis Alliance of Canada (AAC) and the rheumatology community in the last five years. These initiatives have also formed the basis for our advocacy efforts with policymakers across the country whose decisions today will impact patients' access to quality arthritis care in the years to come.

Our advocacy and awareness goals are to ensure arthritis is fully understood by our key external audiences, such as health care providers, government, employers and private health insurers, and compel them to engage and invest in our community's initiatives. To accomplish these goals, the AAC mobilizes and activates our members, providing them the tools and data to tell the arthritis story.

The AAC has developed guidelines to ensure our advocacy activities are effective and sustainable:

- Integrated with AAC awareness raising;
- Scaled to its capacity and resources;
- Opportunistic and leveraging the current political or policy environment;

- Appealing and relevant to its supporters and members; and
- Offering an opportunity to build government relations capacity of the organization and advocacy interest of AAC supporters and members.

As we move forward, the AAC will continue to leverage the wide range of expertise, capabilities and networks of its members from across Canada to provide evidence-based information to inform and support policies that improve the delivery of care to people with arthritis. Their ongoing work, both as individual organizations and in collaboration with other arthritis stakeholders, is essential to achieving the overall goals of mitigating the personal and societal burden of the more than 100 types of arthritis—the leading cause of pain and disability in Canada.

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