



Accelerating Impact: Celebrating Our History, Building for the Future

The Arthritis Society marks its 70th anniversary by embarking on a new five-year strategic plan

By Janet Yale, President and CEO, Arthritis Society

As the Arthritis Society celebrates 70 years of helping Canadians live better with arthritis, let's reflect on our past – and look toward the future.

Celebrating Our History

The Arthritis Society – then the Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society (CARS) – was created by rheumatologist Dr. J. Wallace Graham and his medical peers to address the crippling effects of rheumatic disease. Under the passionate leadership of Executive Director Mary Pack, the group's tireless efforts helped deliver improved care to people who were often confined to wheelchairs or hospital beds by their arthritis.

The Society established professional grant-ing programs that have helped spur the growth of the rheumatology profession in Canada – from just four doctors in 1948 to more than 400 clinicians practicing today.

Our donors have funded over \$200 million in research investment into arthritis – a legacy unmatched by any other charitable funder in Canada. That research has paid off, as today most people experience dramatically reduced joint damage and improved symptom relief, allowing them to engage fully in their lives in ways that Mary Pack and Dr. Graham could scarcely have imagined.

As health conditions have improved, our service focus has shifted from one-on-one care delivery to scalable information and education programs that allow us to reach more people, arming them with self-management knowledge and tools that are empowering them take control of their health.

And throughout we have continued to advocate, speaking up for the needs and concerns



The distinctive CARS uniform signalled a knowledgeable, compassionate caregiver.



Dr. J. Wallace Graham, one of the founders of CARS.



Mary Pack, the first Executive Director of CARS.

of Canadians living with arthritis, from getting arthritis designated as a chronic disease to advocating for access to and coverage of landmark new treatments.

Seventy years, and so much has changed. But two things have not: our dedication to this cause, and our ongoing partnership with rheumatologists. From the beginning, this close collaboration of medical professionals, patients and volunteers has been essential to our success. And we will continue to lean on the CRA and its members as staunch allies and partners in this struggle. Because we all want to live in a world free from the devastating impacts that arthritis has on lives.

Building for the Future

Impact is what it's all about. We need to exponentially expand the reach of our information and education resources, the research we are able to fund and the scope of advocacy we undertake. We need to heighten public awareness of this disease and the need for urgent action.

Getting there will take more than dedication, more than generosity, more than partnerships. It will take a bold and clear vision of the path forward, and absolute focus on the steps necessary to achieve it. That's why, for the first time in our history, the Arthritis Society is embarking on a five-year strategic plan.

I announced this plan at the recent CRA Annual Scientific Conference. Called "Accelerating Impact," it lays out the work we need to do to expand our reach and impact, to grow awareness and to generate the revenue that fuels our mission growth – because everything we do is made possible through the generous support of our donors and sponsors.

We will continue to engage our valuable partners, the CRA foremost among them, in ongoing dialogue on how best to improve the lives of those with arthritis. For now, the important takeaway is that – like Dr. Graham and Mary Pack before us – we recognize that we cannot afford to be complacent about the challenge that arthritis poses for Canadians. We can do more, therefore we must do more.

We must accelerate our impact, so that 70 years from now we can look back on the day when we eliminated arthritis once and for all.

We look forward to going on that journey with you.

Janet Yale
President and CEO,
Arthritis Society

Online Learning Resources Make Self-management Easier for Arthritis Patients

From the Arthritis Society

Self-management is a critical component of any arthritis treatment plan, but many patients don't know where to start.

Drawing on input from clinicians, educators and patients themselves, the Arthritis Society has dramatically overhauled and expanded our online learning resources to help Canadians living with arthritis learn to take control of their disease.

These free modules allow your patients to learn at their own pace, starting with the subjects that are most important to them, such as:

- Navigating Your Healthcare
- Managing Chronic Pain
- Overcoming Fatigue
- Eating Well

And, being added this Spring:

- Daily Living
- Staying Active
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Joint Matters at Work

"The resources are very informative and enlightening: I will definitely look to alter my daily living strategies and coping mechanisms."

– Feedback from a Module user

Help your patients become more engaged and empowered self-managers. Direct them to these free resources today, at arthritis.ca/education.

