

Arthritis Needs Innovation

By Trish Barbato, President and CEO, Arthritis Society

We all know arthritis represents a group of diseases in need of solutions. Through research, we have made progress in treatment and management, but there is still so much we have to do.

At the Arthritis Society, we're embracing innovation like never before. And as part of our new innovation strategy, we want to bring everyone in the arthritis ecosystem together – to tackle the problems in arthritis, large and small.

Our innovation strategy has three pillars.

Through our new **Ignite Research grants**, we're supporting researchers pursuing high-risk, high-reward ideas. The first of these grants was announced in November 2021. We believe this research will lead to unlocking better diagnosis, better treatment and, ultimately, a cure.

We want to collaborate with researchers and clinicians across Canada to deploy innovative therapies, programs and interventions through our new **Social Impact Program**. We are currently reviewing the expressions of interest we received, with the aim of helping bring one or two programs to fruition over the next year.

Our exciting new **Arthritis Ideator Program** is also underway. Entrepreneurs from across the country have submitted ideas and products they think could help improve the lives of people with arthritis. The finalists will be announced in early 2022 and will then present at our Arthritis



Ideation Den™ in April 2022. Four innovators will each receive a \$50,000 grant to help get their idea to the people who need it.



If we're going to create the kind of transformational change that people with arthritis deserve, we have to do things differently. We look forward to partnering with you on this journey. Learn more and join us at arthritis.ca/innovation.

News from SOAR

By Elana Murphy, MD, FRCPC

After the pandemic forced a cancellation in 2020, rheumatologists and allied health professionals from across the Atlantic provinces attended the 37th Annual Meeting of the Society of Atlantic Rheumatologists (SOAR) on June 19th, 2021. The gathering took place virtually and offered outstanding education along with a welcome opportunity to connect with regional colleagues.

Dr. Janet Pope, MD, MPH, FRCPC, from the University of Western Ontario Schulich School of Medicine, delivered this year's David Hawkins Lecture in Rheumatology entitled "What's New in Scleroderma." She followed this with an engaging presentation on "New Strategies in Lupus Treatment."

The second speaker, Dr. Andrew Mammen, MD, PhD, from the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculos-

keletal and Skin Diseases/National Institutes of Health (NIAMS/NIH) and Johns Hopkins, presented on the evolving field of myositis. He started with an illuminating talk entitled "Autoimmune Myopathy Update" and then led us through the nuances of "Statin-Induced Myopathy."

Dr. Caroline Barry, MD, FRCPC, has taken the reigns as SOAR President. She is busy planning the next annual meeting which will be held at Dalvay by the Sea on Prince Edward Island from June 24-26, 2022. Save the date!

*Elana Murphy, MD, FRCPC
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