
Update on the CRA Foundation (CRAF)

In August, we advised of the plan to establish the Canadian Rheumatology Association Foundation (CRAF), in order to establish legal charitable status and provide financial viability for the organization. The establishment of the CRAF will not only help to fund some of the current activities of the Canadian Rheumatology Association, such as the CIORA and summer studentship program, but it will also expand support to future initiatives through new funding opportunities. The Canadian Rheumatology Association will continue to be the organization that serves the members and will remain the voice of rheumatologists in Canada.

Over the past few months, we have been working with our consultants to advance this project and have made quite a bit of progress.

In early September, we submitted our Charitable Status application to the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA). This process can take up to six months for approval by the CRA. We have also engaged with consultants, including The Dis-

covery Group (governance consultants) to develop a value proposition, and The Dennis Group Inc. (TDG) to refine the operational plan, create supporting documents and develop a foundation budget.

The interim Board of Directors of the CRAF (referred to as the first Board) will hold a meeting at the end of the year to formalize recruitment of the Foundation Board Members and appoint officers. A soft launch of the Foundation is planned for early 2022, when they will unveil the new website, branding of the foundation, and giving opportunities.

The establishment of the CRAF will allow us to build financial sustainability to fund activities that are in-line with our mission, which is focused primarily on serving and representing rheumatologists, so they can continue delivering the best care.

For more information on the process or how you might be able to support the CRAF, please contact Ahmad Zbib, by email at azbib@rheum.ca or by telephone at 905-952-0698 extension 8.

The Annual Canadian Arthritis Research Conference Returns for a Third Year

The third annual Canadian Arthritis Research Conference (CARC) is once again giving researchers, clinicians and consumers the opportunity to network and learn about the latest arthritis research.

The conference, co-presented by the Arthritis Society, the Canadian Rheumatology Association and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research/Institute of Musculoskeletal Health and Arthritis (IMHA), takes place virtually on February 7th and 8th, 2022. CARC brings together multidisciplinary stakeholders to explore perspectives, advance knowledge and enhance Canadian leadership in the world of arthritis and rheumatic diseases.

This year's theme, Research with Impact, features a range of presentations, discussions and networking opportunities with experts, researchers, patients and emerging leaders from the arthritis community.

CARC will feature two keynote speakers and 18 presenters (all program details are available online at arthritis.ca/carc) delivering talks on a range of topics. In addition, the conference provides a forum for investigators to share "Best Research" presentations.

Last year's presentations covered medicine and rehabilitation in both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, as well as a range of topics from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the employment of young people with rheumatic disease to new diagnostic and therapeutic tools for intervertebral disc degeneration and back pain. There were

also several "Ask Me Anything" panels, where presenters and attendees discussed presentation topics in more detail.

Dr. Jackie Whittaker of the CARC Scientific Committee says the conference is not only a great opportunity to hear about the latest arthritis research, but also an opportunity to share ideas with a goal of improving the health of people living with arthritis.

"The challenges of arthritis are varied and vast. Building on the success of the previous two conferences, we are assembling experts and stakeholders to further advance research to better the health of Canadians living with arthritis and rheumatic diseases," said Dr. Whittaker. "Opportunities like CARC allow us to collaborate and share learnings among clinicians, scientists, patients and stakeholders nationally and internationally. We look forward to some very engaging discussions."

In addition to the two-day conference, the second annual Research Presentation Day takes place on January 25 and 31, 2022. Research Presentation Day provides a public platform for research presentations including systematic reviews, all types of original research, and evidence synthesis. This day is more intimate and allows brief conversations and questions about the research with the CARC Scientific Committee and other research presenters. There will be expert tips for all presenters.

For more information about the conference or to register, visit arthritis.ca/carc.