The International Foundation for Autoimmune and Autoinflammatory Arthritis (AiArthritis) focuses its efforts on a small group of diseases that are either autoimmune or autoinflammatory (of the immune system) that include inflammatory arthritis. Through our work we empower more patients to take an active role in their healthcare and in efforts to increase global awareness, affect policy issues, and support research efforts.

In the First Quarter of 2023, AiArthritis has continued to elevate our work in public policy especially with regard to Precision Medicine/Biomarkers and Copay Accumulator Programs - while continuing our work in other important areas like utilization management, PBM transparency, Health Technology Assessments/Value Assessments, and data that influences policy (Research Advocacy).

**Highlights:**

- **Lindsey gave her first live testimony** in the [Maryland State Senate Committee on Health and Government Operations](https://www.maryland.gov/) in early March. The testimony was in favor of HB 1217, coverage for biomarkers. We’ll be continuing to provide live and written testimony throughout the legislative session in any states that we can.

- **ICER - HTA Health Equity Initiative:** AiArthritis CEO, Tiffany Westrich-Robertson, was one of 7 Senior Advisors, [final paper published March, 2023](https://www.icer.org/health-equality-initiative).

  - View Infographic showing outline of video library (Value Assessments) strategy.
Thank you to our program sponsors - Amgen, Lilly, Pfizer, AbbVie, Genentech/Biogen. More Sponsors needed, contact Tiffany to discuss!

- **Chronic Care Policy Alliance event Forecast 2023: The State of Access to Quality, Affordable Health Care in Tempe, Arizona.** Lindsey Viscarra, AiArthritis Public Policy Manager, was asked to participate in the We were one of approximately 15 groups from across the country invited to participate.
  - Lindsey was also asked to join the steering committee of the Alliance. She was honored to accept.

- **Rare Disease Week:** Lindsey also attended Rare Disease Week in Washington, DC, in early February/early March. It was a full 3 days and while she was there, she had the opportunity to meet with staff in 3 key legislative offices: Congressman Eric Swalwell, co-chair of the Personalized Medicine Caucus, Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, chair of the Arthritis Caucus, and Senator Krysten Sinema, co-chair of the Personalized Medicine Caucus. We are looking forward to building these relationships.

- **Clinical Trial Transformation Initiative (CTTI) - Modeling & Simulation Working Group:** AiArthritis is the only Patient Organization in this group, which is no surprise given we are the non-cancer leaders in all things Precision Medicine. Tiffany attended (meeting agenda/summary). Disease progression modeling in clinical trials - as a means to collect data on subgroups - was the focus.
  - However, in a room with mostly clinicians, some pharma, and researchers, Tiffany and one other attendee, President of the Critical Path Institute, bonded over recognizing the bigger picture to get patient orgs involved in blueprints for these procedures so thought of end use (Utilization Management & Value Assessments) is always considered in the design. AiArthritis & C-Path have signed a collaboration agreement to begin identifying missing gaps in autoimmunity and the R & D continuum through regulatory and policy implementation to advance medical innovation. Sponsorships/support pending. Please contact Tiffany to discuss if interested.
**Coalitions**

We currently participate in over 2 dozen coalitions worldwide, over 75% of which are related to public policy. *View all the Coalitions we belong to here.*

- In the first quarter of 2023, we joined 3 new coalitions:
  - Alliance for a Stronger FDA
  - Patients for Prescription Access
  - Global Advocacy Alliance

**Conferences, In Person Meetings Webinars, and Events**

In addition to attendance mentioned earlier in this report, AiArthritis participated in many Conferences, Webinars, and Events [SEE FULL TRACKER].

**Communications with Legislators**

In the first quarter, AiArthritis continued to advocate for patients and it was a busy quarter!

**Highlights:**

- We sent 19 letters to legislators in 13 states on a variety of important topics, including coverage for biomarker testing, efforts to ban the use of copay accumulators, PBM reform, and to increase access to affordable prescriptions.
- We sent written testimony on 6 bills and gave live testimony on 1 more. Our testimony was overwhelmingly in support of biomarker testing.
We signed on to 33 letters - to legislators in 13 states and to several Regulatory Agencies.

- Establishing Rare Disease Advisory Councils
- Prohibitions on White-Bagging
- Step Therapy reform
- Many letters to Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding the NBPP 2024 proposed rule
- An amicus brief was filed in support of a lawsuit brought by the HIV + Hepatitis Institute in opposition to copay accumulators. We were proud to be included.
- [HERE](#) is a PDF of the letters we sent and signed on to.

**We are excited that this is the first quarter we’re using FastDemocracy to track legislation.** Gone is the google sheets tracker and [HERE](#) you’ll find a PDF of the bills we are tracking in 2023, along with notes on the letters and testimony we prepared.

FastDemocracy also allows us to create pre-written letters for anyone who wants to communicate with their legislators. For the first quarter, we had 2 campaigns active - one for the Safe Step Act, and one for the HELP Copays Act. We’ll be adding more in the second quarter!
Social Media

In the first quarter, AiArthritis mainly used our Twitter platform to tweet about legislative issues, totaling nearly 17,000 impressions and 112 mentions. We tweeted about access to pharmacists, PMB reform, Telehealth, the Inflation Reduction Act, Copay Assistance and Accumulator programs, and many more topics. Here are a few highlights!