

DONOR IMPACT REPORT



ARTHRITIS SOCIETY
BC & YUKON DIVISION
2018/19



Dear Friends,

It's been a busy year! Thank you for your continued support of people living with arthritis and of our efforts.

Our new brand identity continues to create enthusiasm in the arthritis community. Building off that momentum, we've joined forces with our colleagues across Canada to create a new five-year strategic plan for the Arthritis Society that will bring our work — and your support — into sharper focus.

We want to support people today, while changing the future of arthritis, based on solid foundations:

- ▼ **Research:** We will spark new ideas in arthritis research
- ▼ **Advocacy:** We will be a critical patient voice on health issues
- ▼ **Information & Support:** We will engage Canadians to reduce the impact of arthritis



These are lofty goals, but with the incredible support and devotion of donors like you, volunteers, partners and staff, we're confident we will reach them.

Through your support, you are already helping more than 700,000 people in British Columbia with arthritis, and more than six million in Canada. You've made such a difference and we're so grateful for that. We hope you'll now follow us on the next stage of our mission.

Warm regards,

Christine Basque
Executive Director, Arthritis Society BC & Yukon

2018/19 Year in Review

Taken through the lens of our new plan, here some highlights of the work that you helped make possible.

Research

We continually invest in scientific research and discovery to try to understand the causes of arthritis, to develop innovative solutions that improve the quality of life for those living with arthritis and to find a cure. Thanks to the generosity and vision of donors like **you**, we're the leading charity in funding cutting-edge arthritis research across Canada.

"It's the vision and generosity of donors like you that help us change the future of arthritis care. Thank you."

Stop Childhood Arthritis

In February 2019, we were delighted to formalize a partnership with Cassie & Friends to support our research investments into juvenile idiopathic arthritis via the [Stop Childhood Arthritis](#) initiative. This is on top of the \$5 million we had already committed with Genome Canada and other institutions to fund groundbreaking research, including personalized therapies, earlier detection, prevention and quality of life supports.

This is great news for the three in every 1,000 Canadian infants, children and teens who are plagued by unnecessary pain. And it's great news for Canadian pediatric rheumatology researchers, as it will help them accelerate their work.

STOP
Childhood Arthritis
in its tracks



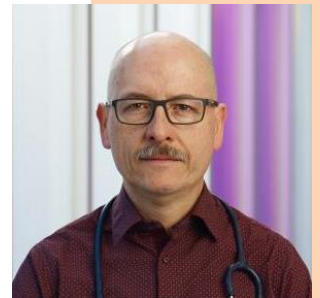
Highlights

That's just one project of many. Some other major research highlights in BC from the past year include:

- ▼ **Mental health matters in arthritis** — Dr. Mary De Vera, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of British Columbia (UBC), is examining the complex relationship arthritis has with mental health. It's a vicious circle: having arthritis may lead people into depression or anxiety, and those conditions can exacerbate arthritis. Dr. De Vera is studying records of doctors' visits, hospitalizations and prescriptions to see if depression and anxiety in British Columbians with arthritis is rising and what impact other factors, such as medications, have. This first study of its kind in Canada will not only improve the lives of people with arthritis but will also bring more awareness to this topic.



- ▼ **A clinical trial to prevent side effects of treatment in children with arthritis** — Dr. Jaime Guzman, Clinical Associate Professor in Pediatrics at UBC's Faculty of Medicine, is looking at why many children who take Methotrexate suffer from nausea and vomiting. This side effect can affect their everyday lives, causing these children to switch to expensive biologics, even if the Methotrexate had been helping control the joint swelling in their arthritis. Dr. Guzman is testing the use of a drug called ondansetron alongside Methotrexate treatment to prevent nausea and vomiting in children. If it works, this treatment could influence clinical practice to improve the quality of life for children with arthritis and their families.



- ▼ **Empowering doctors to prevent chronic health problems in people with inflammatory arthritis** — Dr. Diane Lacaille, Associate Professor of Rheumatology at UBC's Faculty of Medicine, is developing and testing an automated way to send family doctors reminders to check for and manage risk factors for chronic diseases in their patients who have inflammatory arthritis. Those patients, due to the inflammation, could be at risk of serious health issues, such as heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, infections and cancer. If successful, Dr. Lacaille's system would help doctors establish effective prevention strategies to keep people with IA as healthy as possible so to live long and full lives.



We provide various types of funding to assist other forms of arthritis research. One of those is the PhD Salary Award, which Graham Macdonald is using at UBC to examine the power dynamics experienced by patient partners in arthritis research. These insights will help improve patient engagement, fostering research that involves and empowers people with arthritis to transform the disease.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jasmin Ma is using her Postdoctoral Fellowship at UBC and Arthritis Research Canada to look at strength training for people with rheumatoid arthritis. Although they should perform strength training exercises at least twice a week to build or maintain muscles, as well as reduce pain and fatigue, remarkably few people with RA meet this goal. Dr. Ma is studying what factors help and hinder strength training among people with RA and will pick out the best strategies to support their long-term engagement in this type of physical activity so that the quality of their lives improves.

Advocacy

We aim to be the trusted and critical voice for Canadians on arthritis-related issues. Your support both financially and through our advocacy programs helps make that voice louder and heard more across the country. **Thank you!**

Medical cannabis

We advocate for research into the use of cannabis for medical purposes and for the needs of people who use cannabis for medical purposes.

Medical cannabis is a potential alternative to traditional pharmaceuticals such as NSAIDs and opioids. However, there are many unanswered questions about the use of medical cannabis to treat arthritis symptoms, and physicians do not have formal guidelines about when, how and for whom to prescribe medical cannabis.



We're calling for the federal government to end taxation of medical cannabis. Medical cannabis patients must pay sales tax on their medication, and a further 10% excise tax. No other physician-authorized drug is subjected to taxation. This unfair policy places an additional financial burden on patients who already pay upwards of \$500 per month for their medication, without support of provincial or private drug plans. We believe medical cannabis should be tax exempt.

We would also like to see the distribution of medical cannabis in pharmacies. This would create a clear distinction between medical cannabis and cannabis for recreational/non-medical use. It would ensure that patients receive reliable education on the safe and effective use of medical cannabis from trained health-care professionals. This measure would also help ease reimbursement by health insurance plans.

Fixing a gap in care in BC's Interior

Dr. Kathy Gross, the only pediatric rheumatologist in the BC Interior, retired from her practice in Penticton in January 2019. Since then, we've worked with Dr. David Cabral, Division Head at BC Children's Hospital Division of Rheumatology, and others to explore practical solutions to ensure this gap in care is addressed.

More than 200 families are affected by juvenile arthritis and other rheumatic diseases in this region. They all know only too well the devastating effects that arthritis has on lives. Timely care, especially in the case of children presenting with arthritis symptoms, is crucial because early diagnosis and treatment can prevent serious and irreversible joint damage from occurring. Without regular and consistent care, these children may live with more pain, worse inflammation, and restricted mobility.



Your support of our advocacy in BC's Interior is helping us find a solution for BC's kids.

Arthritis Access Initiative

We're committed to a comprehensive approach for people with arthritis in BC's underserved regions, addressing the immediate need while working towards and advocating for long-term solutions. Through the help of generous donors, we've created the Arthritis Access Initiative, which is a key component of that commitment.

The initiative includes the Fellows Rotation, which provides diverse learning opportunities for rheumatology fellows and supports practising rheumatologists and patients in these communities.

Dr. Mohammed Bardi, a rheumatology fellow based in Vancouver, extended his training last year into rural rheumatology clinics and treatment centres in the province's Interior. During his training, Dr. Bardi worked in three clinics that all have innovative care models emphasizing the importance of teams and working together to optimize patient care.

"Being in the final year of my training, the need to consider potential practice options is critical, and this rotation allowed me to explore attractive rural options."

– Dr. Mohammed Bardi

"The nurse-led model has great potential to positively impact my practice and allows me to better serve patients with varied autoimmune conditions in northern BC."

– Dr. Greg Marcotte

Care Capacity Fund

There are currently just 10 rheumatologists in the Interior (one in Prince George) who care for thousands of people with arthritis in their lives. Our Care Capacity Fund is piloting a nursing model of care in northern BC to increase access for patients in these underserved areas. Bringing in a nurse, who is responsible for gathering data, educating and supporting patients, allows the rheumatologist to focus on diagnosis, treatment and problem solving.

Dr. Greg Marcotte, who started Prince George's first ever rheumatology practice, is the first recipient of the fund. During the past year, he has enjoyed the mentorship and support of Dr. Michelle Teo, who has already implemented this model of care in her Penticton practice. Using both remote and in-person training, Dr. Teo advised on how to choose the right nurse, adjusting Dr. Marcotte's working practices to accommodate changes and guidance on how the model will best serve BC's northern communities.

The model has enabled Dr. Marcotte to see more patients with complex rheumatology conditions in a timely manner and stopped those patients from having to travel elsewhere to get care.

Information & Support



We provide relevant and targeted information to the arthritis community and beyond in many other ways. One such vehicle was a series of three Arthritis Connects symposiums on Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland and the Interior in 2018-19:

- ▼ **Lifestyle Management – Exercise and Nutrition**
- ▼ **Arthritis and Mental Health**
- ▼ **Arthritis and Pain Management**

Each event, which was conducted both in-person and as a webinar, had two to four expert speakers, such as rheumatologists, nutritionists and psychologists. They communicated the research initiatives and results in a way that made sense to patients and caregivers in their everyday lives. Each symposium was then capped off by a panel discussion which allowed participants to continue the discussions with the guest speakers.



*Your support enabled hundreds of people to get the tools they need to become better self-managers of their arthritis and symptoms. **Thank you!***

Other regional highlights

Camp Capilano

Your amazing support for kids did not stop at research.

2018 saw the 36th year of our popular educational retreat at Camp Capilano in North Vancouver for kids with arthritis from across BC. We're proud to provide this unique platform for children aged between 9 and 17 to learn through adventure, their peers, and mentorships with counsellors.

We may fund the program, but the foundation of its success is our partnership with the wonderful pediatric rheumatology team from BC Children's Hospital. They create the curriculum, and then lead and facilitate the activities and adventures on the ground.

Living with arthritis can be an isolating experience for anyone, let alone kids. Especially one who may never have previously met another child living with the same disease. Going to camp allows kids just to be themselves while they learn self-advocacy skills and ways to manage their arthritis.

Thank to donors like you, more than 1,000 kids have enjoyed a transformational summer for nearly 40 years.



Walk for Arthritis

Canadians in more than 40 communities — eight in BC — took part in our annual Walk for Arthritis in June 2018. More than 8,000 people came together to raise more than \$1 million.

For so many, it's personal. As one participant said: *"I have memories of my father not being able to walk when he got home from work and having to crawl from our entryway to the living room. I want to do whatever I can to help find a cure. I don't want to see anyone else go through the things I've seen, or experience the kind of pain my father went through."*

The Walk, thanks to its thousands of donors and corporate sponsors, has contributed \$11 million to support our work.

All-in for Arthritis Gala

We held our annual casino-inspired Gala in January 2019 at the Terminal City Club, Vancouver. More than 180 guests took part in a fun-filled evening that raised over \$140,000 towards research into childhood arthritis. A Texas Hold'em poker tournament, a silent auction and mystery balloons all added to the entertainment.

"Knowing that you're not alone and having others like you to surround yourself with and support you makes the world of difference, I have Camp to thank for that."



Future prospects

This is where you've helped us get to. Now look at the opportunities that lie ahead through our five-year plan for us to work together:

- ▼ **We're a critical voice on health issues in our country, investing in advocacy to drive public-policy change that will improve the lives of Canadians living with arthritis.**
- ▼ **We will spark new ideas and careers in innovative arthritis research that is informed by patient priorities.**
- ▼ **We are creating and promoting digital resources that will amplify our message and increase our reach and impact in communities across Canada.**

Much of this work has begun already, including Arthritis Talks, a new nationwide series of online educational webinars bringing the latest advice from arthritis experts directly to the people who need it most.

To find out more about the latest developments, connect with us on one of our many digital platforms.

Stay in touch!

arthritis.ca

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