



Strategic Plan, 2016-2020

For 35 years, the Rheumatology Research Foundation has advanced research and training to improve the health of people with rheumatic diseases. In all, the Foundation has committed more than \$180 million to the field of rheumatology through more than 3,700 individual research and training awards. Its support has had a significant impact on rheumatology professionals and patients. The Foundation's support for rheumatology training is also helping ensure people with rheumatic diseases have access to the members of the interprofessional team best suited to treat them.

The Foundation's leadership has worked to build strong programming, which is central to its mission. ***The areas outlined in this plan are intended to complement existing programs, not replace them.*** The plan proposes opening the research portfolio up to encourage applications in the new areas outlined within, while maintaining a balance between funding workforce development and innovative research.

I. Expand the Rheumatology Workforce

Goal A: Ensure adequate supply of (a) rheumatology providers meeting the needs of children and adults with rheumatic diseases; and (b) rheumatology educators and investigators to train future clinicians and advance research in rheumatic diseases

Strategies

- ▶ Increase engagement within the rheumatology and medical communities
- ▶ Increase efforts to attract high caliber medical students, residents, and health professionals to rheumatology
- ▶ Increase efforts to recruit and support trainees who express interest in practicing in underserved areas
- ▶ Increase support for post-graduate training for Physicians Assistants and Nurse Practitioners
- ▶ Increase the number of Foundation-funded rheumatology fellowships nationwide

Goal B: Support the redesign of future rheumatology healthcare delivery by engaging academic and clinical rheumatology communities in planning and adaptation efforts

Strategies

- ▶ Support health services research in rheumatology care redesign.
- ▶ Support research in rheumatologic care delivery mechanisms, technology applications, and financial models
- ▶ In coordination with ACR, facilitate sharing and/or distribution of resources developed as a result of Foundation funding (e.g., new diagnostic tools, practice models, educational modules, etc.)

II. Promote New Research Directions in Rheumatology



Goal A: Develop infrastructure required for research that will demonstrate the value of care of patients with rheumatic disease.

Strategies

- ▶ Identify and establish a structured and sustainable network of partners committed to the shared goal of demonstrating and improving the value of care of patients with rheumatic disease
- ▶ In collaboration with the established network of partners and relevant constituents, define the pathway and benchmarks of progress that are prerequisites for successful research studies that will demonstrate the value of care of rheumatic disease patients.
- ▶ Facilitate access to clinical research resources, including the ACR registry and practice management data, which provide the necessary infrastructure for research addressing the value care of patients with rheumatic disease.

Goal B: Support research that defines the most relevant and high impact measures of and models for optimal delivery of high value care of patients with rheumatic disease.

Strategies

- ▶ For all Foundation grant mechanisms, specifically highlight the desired submission of proposals with the goal of identifying and validating outcome measures relevant to demonstration of value of rheumatologic care.
- ▶ Support research that addresses implementation of value-based models of care for rheumatic disease patients.

Goal C: Support research that identifies and predicts the management approaches and therapeutic agents that will achieve optimal outcomes for individual patients with rheumatic disease.

Strategies

- ▶ Support research that investigates the genetic or biologic parameters associated with clinical manifestations or responses to therapy and assesses its value to patient management and selection of therapy, ultimately reducing cost of care.
- ▶ Support research that incorporates current and future networks of investigators as well as existing data and biobanks
- ▶ Support training of investigators in bioinformatics and use of novel scientific and analytic approaches that will be applied to studies relevant to rheumatic diseases.

III. Meaningful Partnerships

Goal A: Engage new and existing partners in meaningful relationships to advance the mission of the Foundation

Strategies

- ▶ Identify opportunities for all stakeholder groups to engage with the Foundation that command attention in a meaningful way to the stakeholder
- ▶ Identify appropriate partners to advance the mission of the Foundation and strengthen the collective impact in workforce development and innovative research
- ▶ Establish structured, mutually beneficial existing and new relationships that will be very strategic and purposeful in order to advance the Foundation's mission