

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



This year, thanks to the generous support of our donors, we widened the breadth of our programming and successfully completed one of our most important transitions to date, marking a tremendous turning point for the Rheumatology Research Foundation—one that not even a global pandemic could stop!

As we celebrate our 35th anniversary, we are proud of the continual growth of the Foundation and its impact on research and patient care. With a dedication to fiscal responsibility and transparency that designates us as among the best charities in the nation, we are proud to offer our Annual Report and invite you to learn more about the impact of our awards, the source of our funding, and the members of our community who make possible the journey to end rheumatic disease.

The Foundation is the nation's largest private funding source for rheumatology research and training. We are wholly dedicated to improving the health of the 54 million Americans living with rheumatic disease. In 2020, the Foundation awarded more than \$10 million to fund research, education, and workforce development within the field of rheumatology.

The Rheumatology Research Foundation is a charitable 501(c)3 organization dedicated to advancing research and training to improve the health of people with rheumatic disease.

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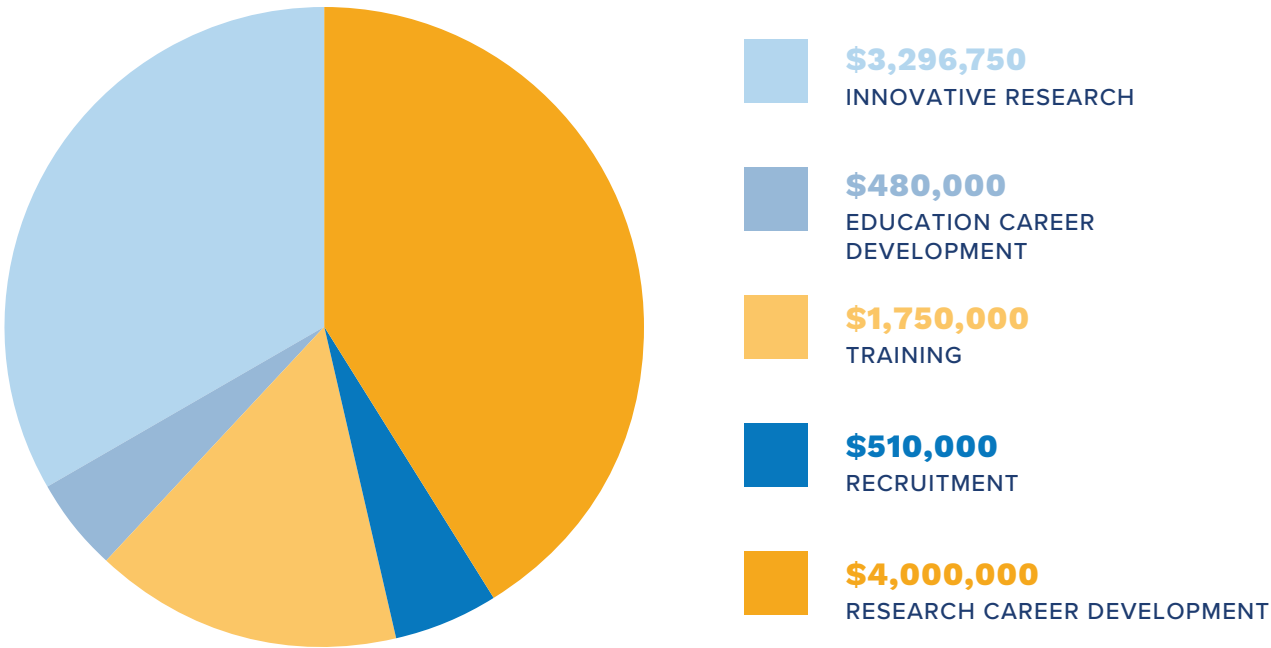
19.

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COMMITTED TO FUND \$10,036,750 FOR FY2020



Awarded an additional **\$1.65M** in October 2020 to fund five research studies exploring the relationships between rheumatic diseases and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

OVERCOMING COVID-19 CHALLENGES

Though the pandemic changed the way our organization functions, due to our generous supporters, our commitment to advancing rheumatology research and training has not wavered.

Embracing Digital

The unprecedented nature of the challenges presented by the pandemic led the Foundation to develop new, and expand existing, ways of supporting the rheumatology community. Digitalization of new and existing programs allowed the Foundation to meet people where they are, and realize significant efficiencies.

The [COVID-19 Webinar for Patients with Rheumatic Disease](#) provided an opportunity for patients to connect directly with experts in the field.

In order to maximize the impact of Foundation-funded research, each summer researchers have the opportunity to share updates at the Investigators Meeting. This meeting provides Foundation-funded researchers with an opportunity to share updates on their studies, network, exchange ideas, and collaborate on future projects to advance treatments and cures for rheumatic diseases.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting transitioned to a virtual [Summer Research Series](#). This four-part virtual meeting allowed investigators to provide updates on their Foundation-funded research projects remotely and an opportunity for additional stakeholders to participate.

Creating New Funding Approaches

The pandemic required the Foundation to pivot and create new approaches to funding COVID-related research. The Foundation issued a **Notice of Special Interest (NOSI)** addressing the urgent need for research evaluating relationships between COVID-19 and rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases, as well as the pandemic's effect on health care delivery.

Following this announcement, Foundation leadership hosted a [virtual Call for Applications](#), to discuss the NOSI, current funding mechanisms and additional information related to award opportunities.

In October of 2020, the Foundation awarded \$1.65M to fund five research studies exploring the relationships between rheumatic diseases and SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, as well as the pandemic's effect on health care delivery. This COVID funding initiative adds to the existing, extensive portfolio of other research funded through the Foundation's Awards and Grants program.

AWARDS

In 2020 the Foundation received final reports*
for 47 completed projects.

*Award recipients are required to submit a final report at the end of the award term to record outcomes.
This data is essential to measure the success of these awards.



Current award recipients are using their funding to investigate the following diseases:

- Ankylosing Spondylitis/Spondyloarthritis
- Antiphospholipid Syndrome
- Other Inflammatory Arthritis
- Fundamental Mechanisms of Disease
- Gout
- Inflammation
- Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis
- Osteoarthritis
- Psoriatic Arthritis
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Scleroderma/Systemic Sclerosis
- Sjogren's Syndrome
- Systemic Lupus Erythematosus
- Uveitis
- Vasculitis

Studies could reduce the impact rheumatic diseases have on the:



BRAIN



EYES



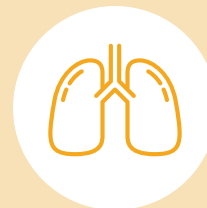
MOUTH



SHOULDERS



SPINE



LUNGS



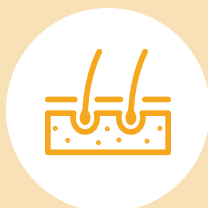
HEART



HIPS



KNEES



SKIN



JOINTS

CARDIOVASCULAR
SYSTEM

Research investigates factors that might cause or worsen rheumatic diseases, including:

- Cell characteristics
- Chemical exposure
- Diet
- Epigenetics
- Genetics
- Gut microbiota
- Immune dysfunction
- Joint features
- Obesity
- Prior injuries
- Smoking

PROJECT OUTCOMES

(Based on 26 final reports*)

Recipients shared the following research outcomes as a result of Foundation funding:

*Award recipients are required to submit a final report at the end of the award term to record outcomes. This data is essential to measure the success of these awards.



NEW DRUG TARGETS



2

BETTER
DIAGNOSTIC
TESTS

11

DEFINED NEW PATHWAYS

14



TWO **NEW** BIOMARKERS



NEW CELL LINE
DEVELOPED



FOUR NOVEL
GENE SIGNATURES

FOUR NOVEL EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTS DEVELOPED



10 NEW
INSIGHTS INTO
CLINICAL
ASSOCIATIONS



NEW PRO
MEASURE*

8

NEW
EPIDEMIOLOGIC
FINDINGS



NEW PATIENT DATABANKS



NEW COLLABORATIVE
NETWORKS



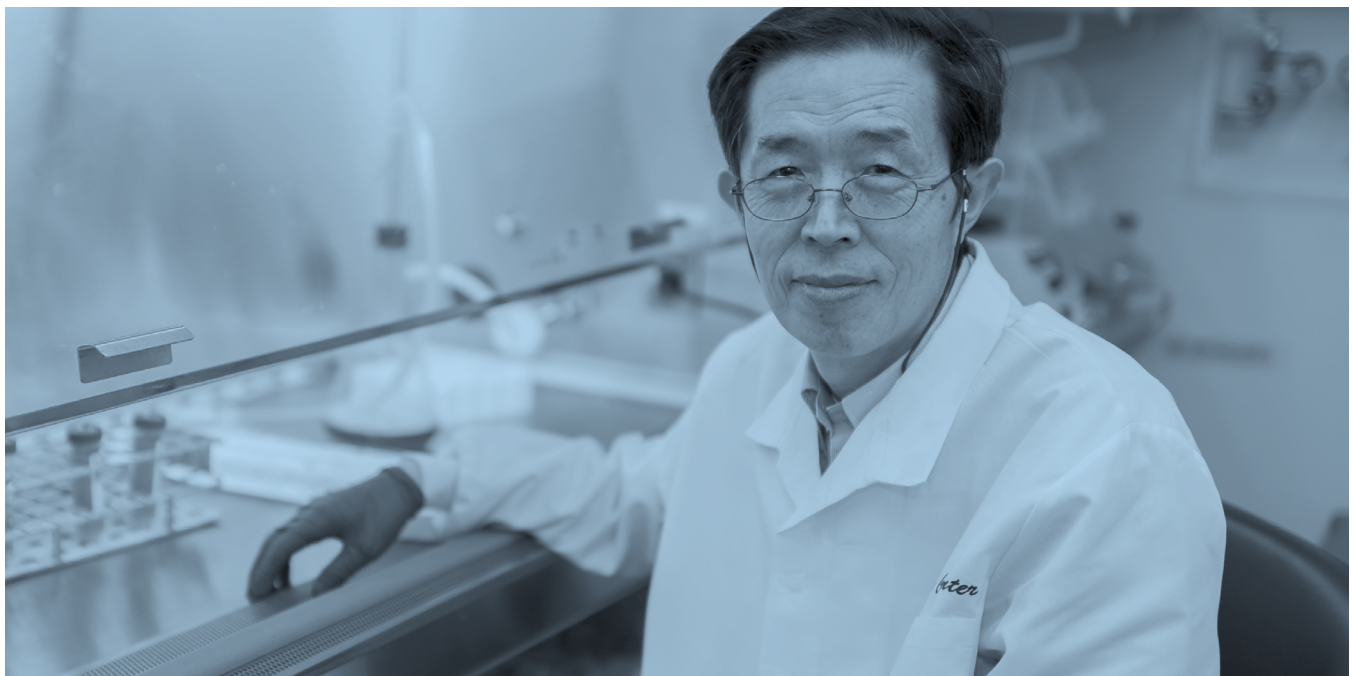
*A patient-reported outcome (PRO) measure is a health outcome directly reported by the patient who experienced it.

CAREER OUTCOMES

(Based on 26 final reports*)

*Award recipients are required to submit a final report at the end of the award term to record outcomes. This data is essential to measure the success of these awards.

- There are 116 peer reviewed publications either published or in-process to be published regarding Foundation funded projects.
- 81% of recipients have gone on to receive additional funding for their projects. This includes awards from the Foundation, NIH, Industry and other private foundations.
- 85% of recipients received a promotion during their award period.
- Recipients have presented their Foundation funded work 143 times.



SUPPORTERS

The generosity of our supporters is integral to our mission. Without the invaluable contributions from members of the American College of Rheumatology, the patient community, and the Corporate Roundtable, we could not spearhead the effort to end rheumatic disease.

Thank you to the members of the Corporate Roundtable:

Leadership



Pinnacle



Principal



Partner



In 2020 we saw a significant increase in the number of donors investing in the mission of the Foundation. Thank you to everyone whose support is vital to Foundation programming:



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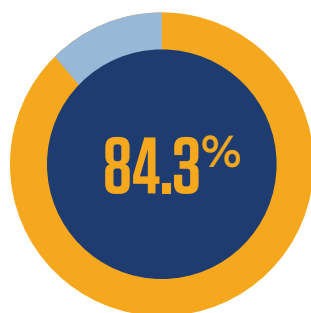
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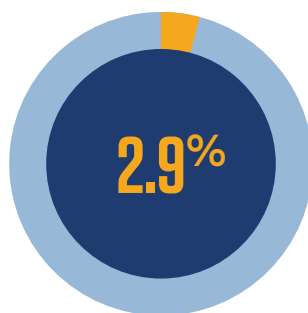
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FINANCIALS

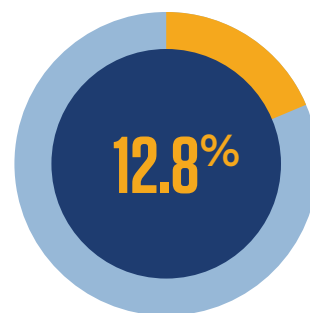
Our high level of fiscal responsibility ranks us among the top 1% of charities in the nation and allows us to focus on what is the most important: the health of people living with rheumatic disease.



PROGRAMS



ADMINISTRATION



DEVELOPMENT



Charity Navigator is the nation's largest charity evaluator, providing the Foundation with its highest rating of four stars for the 12th consecutive year!

The Foundation also received the Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar.