



Advocates for Responsible Care

We will be their voice until their voices are heard.

May 2011

Hello ARxC Volunteers and Friends,

With the school year coming to a close and with things heating up with ARxC projects we are working to organize our events and develop plans for this coming summer. As outlined in the previous newsletter we have a number of upcoming events to which we need your support and attendance.

Arthritis Walk

The first of ARxC events is the **2011 “Let’s Move Together” Arthritis Walk** that is held on **May 14** at the **Concourse Office Center** at 5 Concourse Pkwy NE in Atlanta.

As a lifetime member of the Arthritis Foundation and the head of the foundation’s advocacy chapter, Dorothy organizes the Wisdom Walkers ARxC to walk every year at the Arthritis Foundation’s annual fundraising event. Last year ARxC walked with the Wisdom Walkers (see image to the right) and helped to generate over \$3000 to go towards the Arthritis Foundation, a service-oriented non-profit organization that works to end the pain of arthritis. The event proved to be a fun opportunity for all who participated.



This year ARxC will again be walking with the Wisdom Walkers. The event serves as an opportunity for us to have fun, assist with the dissemination of advocacy news and updates (including ARxC’s Health Plan Assessment Survey©), network with other chronic illness organizations, and, most importantly, MOVE as a means to reduce the pain or prevent the pain of arthritis.

To join the Wisdom Walkers ARxC please go to the [Wisdom Walkers ARxC homepage](#) and click the “Join Our Team” link. If you cannot join us on May 14th please consider making a small donation to our team or forwarding our information on to your friends and family for them to make a donation. You can make a donation by clicking the “General Team Donation” link on the [Wisdom Walkers ARxC homepage](#).

ARxC Health Plan Assessment Survey © Dissemination

Our next big step is to disseminate the link to the ARxC Health Plan Assessment Survey © and encourage Georgia residents to take the survey. We are continuously working to send out notices about our survey and recruiting people to take the survey online. Again, the purpose of the survey is to assess what Georgia citizens want from their health insurance plans as a means to inform the development of the ARxC WELLCARxE model

and notify the state legislatures on what health insurance components the citizens want from the new state-based health benefit exchanges.

We need volunteers to assist us with these efforts. We plan to employ the use of email, social networking, flyers, and handouts to disseminate the link out to Georgia citizens. If you would like to play a role in the state-wide dissemination of the ARxC Health Plan Assessment Survey © please contact us.

Dialysis Crisis

ARxC has the most pressing issue of finding care for Grady's dialysis patients. As you know **our 31 patients are at risk of losing their life-sustaining dialysis treatments on September 1, 2011.** We are currently taking steps to connect the patients with the resources to obtain legal status, partner with elected officials to provide these uninsured patients with continuous dialysis treatments, and prepare for negotiations with the Grady Health System. However, the hospital continues to claim that their finances do not allow for the continuation of care for their uninsured dialysis patients. We, therefore, may be forced to appeal to the courts to continue their dialysis treatment, an effort that will be implausible if we do not develop the funds needed to pay the court fees and compensate for legal representation.

It is crucial that we develop the funds necessary to advance our last resort legal approach as a means to put pressure on the Grady Health System. While we continue to post announcements online and on our social networking sites, we urgently need volunteers to lead fundraising initiatives. During the patient meeting that took place last month there was interest in organizing an event where the patients could sell food. **We look to our volunteers and patients to coordinate this fundraiser initiative or lead other fundraising events or opportunities.** It is critical that we have the financial means to ensure that Grady continues to provide dialysis treatment to their uninsured End-Stage-Renal Disease (kidney failure) patients. A prominent volunteer, Ana, is also seeking to do a 'radiothon' on one of the Spanish-speaking radio shows to help raise funds. She needs more volunteers to assist her with this effort. Please contact us if you would like to go on radio to talk about our mission to continue dialysis care and/or tell your personal story as it relates to the dialysis crisis.

Recently ARxC has been notified of a number of cases in Georgia where undocumented individuals with End-Stage-Renal Disease have been turned down from receiving dialysis treatment. Tragically, we are unable to secure dialysis for these patients, forcing them to seek dialysis treatment from the emergency department of neighboring hospitals when their blood toxicity levels are critically high. We find this criminal. We, therefore, continue our fight to stop this injustice and negligence for the sanctity of human life by increasing awareness of this problem and continuing efforts to introduce legislation that protects these patients from being medically abandoned.

More Grady Clinics Closing

Following our April 6 protest at the Otis W. Smith Clinic, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners voted in favor of preserving the clinic. However, the clinics remain at risk of being closed by the Grady Health System, of which is claiming the closures are justified due to budgetary problems.



On April 25, 2011 Dorothy Leone-Glasser spoke to the Fulton County Board of Commissioners to demand that they hold the Grady Health System accountable to serving the indigent. Citing the case of Gloria, a former Grady dialysis patient and mother of two who is now forced to seek her dialysis treatments from the emergency department, Dorothy appealed to the Board to ensure that the Grady Health System fulfills their mission “to provide healthcare to indigent individuals and the sick or injured and to promote the general health and welfare of the citizens of the State of Georgia and surrounding areas.” For a full review of Dorothy’s statement please go to [April 25th Statement to the Fulton County Board of Commissioners](#).

If improvements are not made in holding the Grady Health System accountable to serving Georgia’s uninsured and low-income individuals and families, ARxC proposes that the Fulton and DeKalb commissioners and the DeKalb/Fulton Hospital Authority withdraw funding to the Grady Health System and forward it to a more responsible health care clinic that is willing to commit to providing health care to this population.

Opposing Prescription Drug Tiers

ARxC is proposing a **CALL TO ACTION** to urge our members of Congress to introduce and support legislation that would prohibit *specialty brand tiers*. Insurance companies are instituting their *Tiers* of therapy that require patients to pay higher co-payments on their life-saving and treatment enhancing drugs. The insurance companies developed *Specialty Tiers* that include the most necessary, innovative and expensive Arthritis and other chronic disease drugs. The insurers want to charge a higher co-payment (cost-sharing) for these prescription drugs which could result in large out of pocket expenses for the most vulnerable patients. Many of our oral, infused and injectable drugs would be subject to this unfair practice.

As Arthritis and other chronic disease patients we call on our Georgia Insurance Commissioner to end this unlawful discriminatory practice. We also ask our legislators to prohibit insurance companies from imposing drug tiers and to adapt legislative language and policy that prevents any hidden costs, out-of-pocket costs or any cost-sharing practice that lowers patient utilization of these life-saving drugs.

Please join us in ending these dangerous coinsurance practices that jeopardize the health of Georgians by **signing the Arthritis Foundation’s petition** on our website under [Advocacy Actions](#).

Please continue to check our organizational Facebook page ([Advocates for Responsible Care](#)) our twitter account (username: ARxC Advocates) and our website (www.advocatesforresponsiblecare.org) for the latest developments and updates.

Thank you again for being an ARxC volunteer and Friend. We appreciate your efforts in contributing to our cause of “effectively reducing cultural incompetency and health care delivery disparity.”

Sincerely,
Haley

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