



Women In Government Rheumatoid Arthritis State Legislative Task Force Policy Recommendations

The following policy recommendations were developed by Women In Government's Rheumatoid Arthritis Task Force and approved by the Board of Directors. The Task Force was formed in 2008, will meet annually, and consists of a national, bipartisan group of state legislators and state agency representatives.

Task Force Mission Statement

The mission of the Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) Task Force is to reduce the impact of RA on patients and their families by promoting education and awareness, ensuring early diagnosis and treatment, improving access to healthcare services, expanding vocational rehabilitation programs, sharing best practices and addressing rheumatoid arthritis through state action plans.

Access to Healthcare Services & Treatment

States should examine existing healthcare programs including the availability of alternative therapies and provide education about patient assistance programs, eliminate insurance barriers, examine tiered insurance formulae and cap co-insurance payments.

Collaboration of Stakeholders

States should identify and encourage a broad collaboration to expand evidence-based health services for rheumatoid arthritis patients. A collaborative approach requires the involvement of federal, state, and local agencies and policymakers and the engagement of other stakeholders, such as: patients and their families, employers, health providers and industry, insurance providers, agencies on aging, faith-based organizations, the media, health and disability advocates, and women's organizations. States should engage these partners to create and implement programs increasing awareness of this disease, and improving access to treatment and rehabilitation services.

Education & Awareness

States should develop outreach programs in collaboration with their Departments of Health to improve education about rheumatoid arthritis, early detection and treatment services. Policymakers should develop community collaborations among advocacy stakeholders and create printed materials, conduct health fairs, and work with the media. State legislators should support awareness resolutions for National Arthritis Month, in addition to other opportunities, to educate the public.

Workforce Development & Vocational Rehabilitation

States should support continued employment of persons with rheumatoid arthritis by supporting workplace accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Policymakers should support increased funding for vocational rehabilitation and counseling programs to expand services for individuals with rheumatoid arthritis and other chronic diseases.

For more information, please visit www.womeningovernment.org.