

Update from the CRA Therapeutics Committee

By Alison Kydd, MD, PhD, FRCPC

The CRA Therapeutics Committee has been busy over the past year. We have been working on new initiatives for the CRA involving the review and approval of Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health (CADTH) submissions for rheumatic medications. Some of the highlights over the past year include the following:

- Ongoing work on several different drug shortage issues.
- Development of a review process for CADTH clinician input applications for submission by the CRA.
- Completion of two CADTH reviews.
- Initial meetings regarding the development of a Drug Access and Adjudication (Pharmacare) Subcommittee.

Monitoring drug shortages and advocating for CRA members and their patients are always our top priorities. We will continue to respond to emerging issues on behalf of our members through position statements.

This work is only possible through the dedication of our volunteer committee members, who are all very busy with their numerous other roles. I would particularly like to thank my former Co-Chair Dr. Rosie Scuccimarri who was vital in overseeing a huge amount of work regarding COVID vaccinations. She continues her work as one of our committee members. We have had several new members join our committee who are highly committed and efficient. I am always impressed with our committee members' timely responses and expert guidance. As always, our work would not be possible without Sarah Webster, a CRA staff member, who is critical to our ongoing functioning.

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New Report Highlights Significant Gaps in Arthritis Care and Research Across Canada

Arthritis Society Canada released the **State of Arthritis in Canada Report Card** on October 23, 2023, giving low grades to all provinces and territories and underscoring the urgent need for collaboration and innovation in arthritis care.

The report was developed through collaboration within the arthritis community across Canada and stressed the need for a concrete solution-oriented arthritis plan.

Here are the key findings of the State of Arthritis in Canada Report Card:

- **Canada needs better arthritis data:** Data across the country is inconsistent, insufficient, and too siloed to show a clear picture of the problem and its potential solutions.
- **Getting access to care is the challenge:** Too many Canadians cannot access arthritis care and demands outweigh system capacity.
- **Arthritis research is underfunded:** Relative to the burden of disease, including the number of Canadians impacted, more investment is needed in arthritis research.

- **Provincial/territorial findings and opportunities for action:** The highest grade among all jurisdictions in Canada was a "C," indicating significant room for improvement and that much work needs to be done.

This report serves as a launch point, with a renewed sense of urgency, focused on collaboration and innovation in the field of arthritis. We must come together as a community, including governments — provincial, territorial, and federal, embracing the power of partnership and leveraging our collective strengths to enact meaningful change.

For more information, read the Arthritis Report Card at arthritis.ca/about-us/what-we-do/advocacy/report-card.

