

Action on Arthritis: A Comprehensive Technical Assistance Approach to Supporting States

The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors is collaborating with national partners to support State Health Departments, community-based organizations, and their partners in strengthening their capacity to implement arthritis public health strategies, ultimately improving quality of life for adults living with arthritis.

Background/Challenge

Arthritis is a leading contributor to chronic disease burden and a top cause of morbidity, work limitations, and reduced quality of life.¹ An estimated 53 million U.S. adults have arthritis, and this is projected to increase to 78 million by 2040.²⁻³ Arthritis limits physical function and quality of life and commonly co-occurs with other chronic conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.²⁻³ Arthritis and its limitations can be effectively managed, and symptoms improved through routine physical activity and participation in self-management education programs. Low-cost, arthritis-appropriate, evidence-based interventions (AAEBIs) shown to decrease arthritis pain and/or disability and improve quality of life are available across the U.S. but are underused by people who can benefit from them.⁴

CDC, under the CDC-RFA-DP21-2106 five year cooperative agreement, awarded funding to the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) beginning in September 2021 to support and encourage the sharing of experiences, lessons learned, and best practices, and provide an opportunity for networking and leveraging of partnerships for [DP23-0001](#) and [DP21-2106](#) cooperative agreement grantees to advance arthritis public health priorities.

Approach

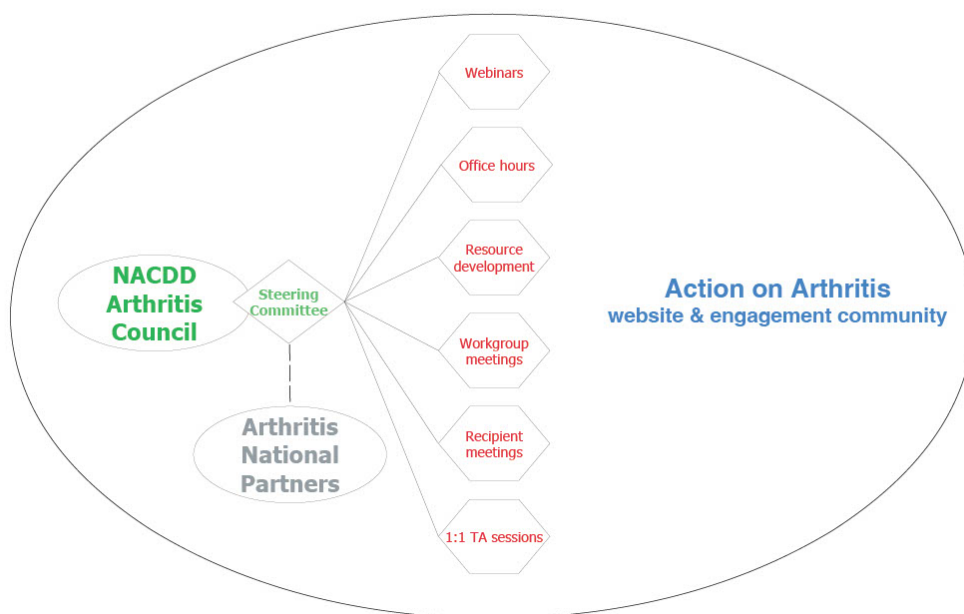
The NACDD Arthritis Team provides a distinct approach to delivering comprehensive training and technical assistance (T/TA) and strategies aimed at advancing arthritis public health priorities. The goal is to support states and their partners by providing tools, insights, and resources that enhance their capacity. The T/TA plan is multifaceted, customized to meet the specific needs of both partners and states, and designed to accommodate various learning styles. It emphasizes the importance of partnerships and cross-program collaboration. In partnership with CDC, the Arthritis Team offers interactive and engaging T/TA tailored to the specific needs of participants. This approach aims to improve the quality, effectiveness, and measurable outcomes of arthritis public health efforts. The T/TA strategy is grounded in both local and national assessments of needs and priorities, offering a range of opportunities (e.g., instructional sessions, peer-to-peer learning) and delivery modalities (e.g., webinars, office hours, one-on-one support). The design is centered on the audience's perspective, ensuring that it is relevant to all.

The NACDD [Arthritis Council](#) serves as a forum for CDC-funded state arthritis programs, national organizations, and other partners to come together for peer-to-peer sharing and learning. Membership in the Arthritis Council is open to all NACDD members. The Arthritis Council is governed by an elected **Steering Committee**, which includes a Chair and additional at-large members. The Steering Committee provides feedback and guidance on T/TA opportunities facilitated by NACDD. All support and T/TA provided is guided by the collective knowledge and efforts of the Arthritis National Partners. These organizations are working together to advance

public health outcomes, including improving arthritis management behaviors among individuals with arthritis, enhancing social and physical environments for those affected, and increasing the number of healthcare providers who screen arthritis patients for function, pain and physical activity. Additionally, healthcare providers are being encouraged to counsel patients on physical activity and refer them to evidence-based community interventions.

Action on Arthritis is a distributed approach that includes a variety of T/TA opportunities, such as content-specific webinars, open office hours, workgroup meetings, recipient meetings, one-on-one support, and resource development. These opportunities provide a space for connecting individuals and facilitating collaboration on arthritis public health strategies. Additionally, T/TA offerings provide participants with opportunities to learn from experts and exchange ideas, strategies, materials, policies, and procedures. T/TA concepts are reinforced through community engagement strategies, encouraging participants to connect with a network of public health professionals working in the arthritis space. NACDD's online community is designed to foster connection, resource sharing and knowledge transfer. It provides access to experts, national partners, statewide contacts, local leaders, and people living with arthritis. (Figure 1)

Action on Arthritis NACDD Arthritis Technical Assistance Model



Results/Impact

NACDD is actively engaging CDC-funded state arthritis programs, CDC-funded national partners, non-funded State Health Departments, and community-based organizations through targeted T/TA. Between September 2021 and February 2025, a total of 2,537 total attendees from 37 states and 25 national organizations participated in at least one NACDD offering. Ninety-nine percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that by attending the peer-to-peer sharing and networking opportunities they gained skills to help them advance their arthritis work.

In addition to evaluating skills participants gained through webinar attendance, NACDD conducts an annual Qualtrics survey assessing all NACDD T/TA opportunities for the year. In September 2024, NACDD administered this survey to collect feedback on participants' experiences with the T/TA provided. Overall feedback suggests that the monthly arthritis program sharing and networking webinars effectively meet participants' needs by offering a platform for resource sharing, networking, peer learning, and collaboration among key arthritis partners. To maximize impact, NACDD will continue focusing T/TA efforts on helping states influence language in state plans, implement best practices, and establish and maintain partnerships to improve the quality of life for adults living with arthritis.

“There have been numerous occasions where the NACDD Arthritis Team’s technical assistance has led to success for us, including expanding our network of potential partners and gaining a better understanding of the processes our partners are using to recruit for these AAEBIs.” - CDC-funded state arthritis program

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024a, March 22). Arthritis related statistics. Arthritis. <https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/basics/index.html>
2. Fallon, E. A., Boring, M. A., Foster, A. L., Stowe, E. W., Lites, T. D., Odom, E. L., Seth, P. (2023). Prevalence of diagnosed arthritis—United States, 2019–2021. MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 72(41), 1101–1107. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7241a1>
3. Hootman, J. M., Helmick, C. G., Barbour, K. E., Theis, K. A., & Boring, M. A. (2016). Updated projected prevalence of self-reported doctor-diagnosed arthritis and arthritis-attributable activity limitation among US adults, 2015–2040. Arthritis & Rheumatology, 68(7), 1582–1587. <https://doi.org/10.1002/art.39692>
4. Osteoarthritis Action Alliance. (2024). Arthritis-appropriate, evidence-based interventions. <https://oaaction.unc.edu/aaebi-2/>

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