

A Functional Collaboration: The Lupus Initiative

Over the past three years, members of The Lupus Initiative consortium have worked together to transform lupus education by leading an effort aimed at eliminating ethnic, racial, and gender disparities in the diagnosis and treatment of lupus through education. Because of these unique collaborations, this catalytic effort not only has the potential to produce meaningful outcomes; it has also established an effective model for success in educational philanthropy.

“An underlying tenet of successful collaboration is the exchange of experiences and perspectives to create new ideas,” said Lisa Amaker, Senior Director of The Lupus Initiative. “The relationships between The Lupus Initiative and its broad circle of collaborators and partners have continued to be invaluable. It’s their guidance and generous cooperation that propels us toward our goal.”

A national consortium of lupus and disparities experts, many of whom are ACR and ARHP volunteers, guides the

Initiative. The consortium is comprised of leaders from private, public, and non-profit entities as well as lupus experts in practice and in academia, and those well-versed in cultural competency, disparities research, and patient awareness. Because of the range of their missions, many of the members hold disparate ideologies. Despite these differences, their shared commitment to the Initiative’s goal has proven to be a solid foundation for success in collaboration. Together, The Lupus Initiative and its consortium

have developed multifaceted approaches to address health disparities experienced by lupus patients and to ensure appropriate messages and education are effectively delivered.

The hard work of the Initiative and its public-private partnerships has materialized in the form of robust educational tools, such as the modular lupus curriculum for trainees, free CME/CE activities, and a variety of other provider and patient tools. Content development for key components of the curriculum has been spearheaded by Betty Diamond, MD, Sam Lim, MD, and David Wofsy, MD; while creation of professional development resources for practitioners has been led by Greg Dennis, MD, and Rosalind Ramsey-Goldman, MD, DrPH.

By emphasizing mutual dedication to the reduction of health disparities in lupus, the volunteers and staff of the Initiative have demonstrated their ability to facilitate successful collaboration by maintaining open lines of communication, by ensuring that roles and expectations are agreed upon, and by building consensus throughout.

Dr. Lim has also provided invaluable insight, guidance, and support as chair of the consortium. “Collaboration among a wide variety of parties is required in an effort like this,” Dr. Lim said. “The functional collaboration that exists within The Lupus Initiative is very unique because collaborations can be challenging, especially when the interests of many parties are represented. Ultimately, collaborations like the Initiative improve rheumatology’s visibility among numerous stakeholders.”

For more information on The Lupus Initiative, stop by booth 1043 in the Exhibit Hall or visit www.TheLupusInitiative.org. ▲

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American College of Rheumatology
2200 Lake Boulevard NE
Atlanta, GA 30319
Phone: (404) 633-3777
www.rheumatology.org

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TriStar Publishing, Inc.
7285 W. 132nd Street, Suite 300
Overland Park, KS 66213
Phone: (913) 491-4200
Fax: (913) 491-4202
www.tristarpublish.com