

October 22, 2021



CRA Membership E-blast

Greetings!

The California Rheumatology Alliance remains dedicated to providing updated news and resources to our membership. We appreciate and encourage any feedback to assist in our service to our members.

If there are any topics you are interested in and would like for us to cover via webinar, please email info@calrheum.org.

[Visit our Website](#)

CRA 17th Annual Meeting at the 38th Annual Carl M. Pearson Memorial Symposium

After a year and a half of cancelled and virtual meetings, we were able to safely and successfully hold our 17th Annual Medical & Scientific Meeting during the 38th Annual Carl M. Pearson Memorial Symposium. It was so wonderful to see so many familiar faces and welcome everyone back to a little piece of life as it was pre-COVID-19.

One highlight of the meeting was our Honorary Luncheon where we celebrated and awarded our 2021 Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Daniel Furst. Family, friends and colleagues gathered together, both in-person and virtually, to share their memories of working with Dr. Furst and how he's positively influenced and impacted their lives and careers. Make sure to visit the CRA website for the link to watch a video of the luncheon as well as view the photo slideshow!

[Watch the Luncheon videos](#)

VICTORY FOR CRA! AB 347 SIGNED INTO LAW

The California Rheumatology Alliance (CRA) had a major victory when the Governor signed [AB 347](#) (Arambula) on October 9th. CRA co-sponsored the bill with the Arthritis Foundation and the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation. AB 347 makes critical improvements to the step therapy and prior authorization processes. Specifically, the bill establishes standard exceptions to step therapy and requires decisions on prior authorization and step therapy exception requests be done within 72 hours or 24 hours for exigent situations.

The battle to have this bill signed into law goes back to 2020 when CRA co-sponsored AB 2144 (Arambula). We immediately began building a coalition of groups to support the bill. BMS joined forces and began organizing weekly coalition meetings. BMS led this effort pulling in resources to work on recruiting more organizations to support the bill as well as multiple people to focus on communications related to public relations and social media outreach. Through this coalition we were able to greatly expand our reach by having multiple articles and "op-ed" pieces run in various news outlets on the bill and issue.

As we began the legislative process in 2020 the COVID pandemic started which led to the Legislature "tabling" a number of bills that were not directly related to the pandemic. As a result, we used 2020 to focus more on adding organizations as supporters, educating Legislators and their staff on the issue, and

a heavy focus on the PR side. Assemblymember Arambula agreed to continue the fight for this legislation and reintroduced the bill in 2021 in AB 347. Dr. Arambula, an emergency physician, was very familiar with the step therapy and prior authorization processes. He had a family member who struggled through the step therapy process and spoke eloquently on these challenges when presenting the bill in committee.

The coalition, largely led by BMS, met weekly and was able to secure more than 70 organizations supporting the bill, but we still had the health plans and health insurers were strongly opposed to the bill. In particular they were opposed to the requirements for mandatory reporting requirements and using clinical peers to review appeals to step therapy exception request denials. As the bill moved through the legislative process, we were not able to keep those aspects of the legislation, but we were able to protect the standard exception requests and the timeframes for obtaining a decision on step exception and prior authorization requests. As the bill passed the Legislature, we focused on directing all our efforts on the Governor with PR and social media campaigns. This proved to outweigh the opposition!

AB 347 is a major victory for CRA and your patients. This new law will lead to you being able to get quicker decisions on step therapy exception and prior authorization requests which will allow your patients to get access to needed medications.

If you have any questions or would like additional information on any of these bills, please contact Tim Madden at madden@mqadvocacy.com.

Upcoming CRA Webinar Opportunities

We have several upcoming webinar opportunities available to our members. Please see the information below and register to reserve your seat today!

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2021 at 6pm PT

WWW.CALRHEUM.ORG/EVENTS

OCTOBER
WEBINAR

*REDUCING DIAGNOSTIC
DELAYS IN NON-
RADIOGRAPHIC AXIAL
SPONDYLOARTHRITIS
(nr-axSpA)*

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2021
6pm PT

Please join us to learn more about how to identify, diagnose and treat nr-axSpA earlier for better outcomes

WWW.CALRHEUM.ORG/EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2021 at 6pm PT



California
Rheumatology
Alliance

We invite you to join us for an upcoming
CRA Webinar titled,

A COVID-19 Vaccine Conversation: Update on the Pfizer Vaccine

Wednesday, November 3, 2021
6pm PT

presented by Michael Dutro,
PharmD/Pfizer. We'll discuss
updates to the Pfizer vaccine and
how to encourage and build
patients' confidence in getting
vaccinated. Q&A to follow!



REGISTER TODAY!

www.calrheum.org/events

Register for the Pfizer vaccine webinar!

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