

Reps. Eshoo and Upton Introduce Arthritis Prevention Bill

Thursday, February 26, 2009

Washington, D.C. - Reps. Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA) and Fred Upton (R-MI) introduced a bill today to address the nearly one in five adults and 300,000 children in America who suffer from arthritis. The Arthritis Prevention, Control, and Cure Act will make landmark investments in research and support services for those suffering from the disease.

“Arthritis is already the leading cause of disability in the United States,” said Eshoo. “Many of those suffering are not receiving the care or the basic information they need to manage the disease. My legislation will help the millions of Americans with arthritis and other rheumatic diseases by helping to treat, cure, and ultimately prevent the disease that diminishes their quality of life and affects the lives of their caregivers and families.”

“This important legislation takes the offensive in our effort to provide relief to the 46 million children and adults who suffer from arthritis each day,” said Upton. “We cannot be complacent — few realize arthritis is the leading cause of disability in the United States, inflicting severe, debilitating pain for one out of every five adults. We are long overdue in finding a cure for arthritis, and this measure will boost the scientific research needed to conquer this disease.”

The bill enhances the National Arthritis Action Plan by supporting federal, state, and private arthritis prevention and management efforts. It also focuses attention on juvenile arthritis research by creating a juvenile arthritis population-based database and establishes education loan repayment and career development award programs to encourage more health professionals to enter the field of pediatric rheumatology.

With more than 300,000 children suffering from pediatric arthritis in the United States, there are approximately only 200 pediatric rheumatologists in the country to treat them. There are nine states without even one doctor to diagnose and treat these children.

“The foundation of this bill is loan repayment to physicians who agree to practice pediatric rheumatology in underserved areas. Children should not have to fly or drive hours and hours to see their doctor. This bill addresses this critical shortfall in care,” said Eshoo.

Eshoo introduced the bill in the last Congress and it enjoys the support of the Arthritis Foundation, the American College of Rheumatology, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.