

## Rheumatology Quality Agenda Themes and Corresponding Society Activities\*

ABMS Standard 18, Development of a Quality Agenda: In collaboration with stakeholder organizations, Member Boards must facilitate the process for developing an agenda for improving the quality of care in their specialties. One area of emphasis must involve eliminating healthcare disparities.

- Member Boards are expected to support a quality agenda in alignment with their specialty-at-large.
- Member Boards must collaborate with key organizations, including specialty societies and other quality organizations, to identify areas in which patient care can be improved, review the areas and define strategies to improve care.

Problem	Drivers	Relevant Society Strategies
<b>AIM 1: Improve self-management support and biopsychosocial care for rheumatology patients.</b>		
<p>Rheumatology patients often receive limited structured counseling on physical activity, sleep or stress, despite the significant impact of these factors on their health and functional ability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to meet the high demand for standardized counseling frameworks and clinician workflows.</li> <li>• Develop an array of brief, reproducible options for patient education outreach.</li> <li>• Increase screening for alcohol use disorders and depression, specifically focusing on the medication interactions.</li> <li>• Educate patients on medication administration and storage to ensure safe use of prescription medications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>EMPOWER – Self-management tools for people living with lupus</u></b> - The American College of Rheumatology defines self-management as a person’s continuous engagement in his/her health care to understand the illness, participate in the determination of a treatment plan, understand and adhere to the treatment plan, and feel empowered to discuss ongoing symptoms and challenges with their healthcare team.</li> <li>• <b><u>Roles of the Interdisciplinary Rheumatology Team</u></b> – To work together effectively, rheumatologists and rheumatology professionals need to understand the roles of every member of the interdisciplinary team. To enhance this understanding, the ARP Interprofessional Practice &amp; Management Committee has undertaken a project to describe the modern roles of members of the interdisciplinary team in a series of fact sheets. These fact sheets are intended to be used by physicians and others on the rheumatology care team to best determine where their practices may be able to enhance the holistic care of patients.</li> <li>• <b><u>Patient Fact Sheets - Diseases &amp; Conditions</u></b> – These pages contain background information on some of the most common rheumatic diseases and conditions as well as causes, common signs and symptoms, diagnosis, treatments and things you should discuss with your health care clinicians about your rheumatic condition.</li> <li>• <b><u>Patient Fact Sheets -Treatments</u></b> – These pages contain background information on some of the most common medications and therapies used</li> </ul>

		<p>to treat rheumatic disease, such as how they work, common dosages, safety tips, possible side effects, risks and things you should discuss with your healthcare clinicians if you are taking or considering these treatments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Living Well with Rheumatic Disease</a> – Living with a rheumatic disease can be challenging, but it doesn't mean you have to stop living. From your next steps after receiving a diagnosis to managing back or neck pain, and also getting answers to your questions about the hereditary risk for certain rheumatic diseases – the articles on this page provide tips and insights on how to not just manage your rheumatic disease – but preserve your quality of life, and live well.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Patient Blog</a> – Information for rheumatology patients and caregivers. The American College of Rheumatology's patient blog provides health and wellness tips for managing rheumatic conditions from trusted rheumatology health care clinicians, as well as advocacy issues affecting the rheumatology community.</li> </ul>
Problem	Drivers	Relevant Society Strategies
<b>AIM 2: Promote health equity and reduce health disparities.</b>		
<p>Health disparities impacting rheumatology patients can result in worse outcomes and are often due to structural barriers like poor insurance, lack of access, workforce shortages, lower health literacy, and implicit bias</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve telehealth services in rural and other underserved areas without sufficient rheumatologists, that comply with state-based insurance requirements</li> <li>• Support the creation of a disparities dashboard: track wait times, guideline adherence, and outcomes by demographic/Zip code.</li> <li>• Amplify the benefits of community partnerships to help promote health equity.</li> <li>• Develop and promote care navigation materials to assist patients in managing the various components of their rheumatology care, specifically regarding state-</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Collaborative Initiatives</a> – ACR's Collaborative Initiatives team collaborates with ACR members and various organizations to develop and provide solutions to complex rheumatology care problems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Volunteers to Expand Rheumatology Access (VERA)</a> is an initiative that aims to improve access to rheumatology care for uninsured and underinsured patients with rheumatic disease in the U.S. by supporting rheumatology clinicians in seeking volunteer opportunities.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Project LEAD</a> is an initiative that aims to intentionally engage and educate medical students from underrepresented backgrounds on the field of rheumatology and the requirements for rheumatology training and practice.</li> <li>• <b>Health Disparities Symposia</b> includes initiatives, programs, and virtual events aimed at bringing together a diverse group of rheumatologists, researchers, principal investigators, allied health professionals, referring physicians and industry leaders to discuss challenges and strategies related to health disparities.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Materials to Increase Minority Involvement in Clinical Trials (MIMICT)</a> – Collaborative opportunities for clinical trial sites and healthcare clinicians. MIMICT delivers accurate, trusted, and</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

	<p>based requirements and approvals for treatments and medications.</p>	<p>understandable information designed to enable people with lupus to make informed decisions about participation in clinical trials.</p> <p>2. <b><u>The Lupus Initiative®</u></b> (TLI), a national program of the American College of Rheumatology (ACR), is dedicated to providing tools and resources. TLI's robust offering includes continuing medical education, patient materials, interactive case studies, videos, presentations, and more. By helping healthcare clinicians recognize who is most at risk for lupus and make appropriate referrals to rheumatologists, TLI aims to improve health prospects for people with undiagnosed lupus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Rural Health Outreach Project</u></b> – The ACR Rural Health Outreach Project (RHOP) aims to reduce health disparities and improve lupus diagnosis in rural areas by enhancing education and referral networks. The initiative involves virtual and live sessions with rural Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) and rheumatologists, reaching over 500 clinicians in 17 states by 2022 and seeking new participants for future cycles.</li> <li>• <b><u>Complimentary Continuing Medical Education</u></b> – The ACR offers a variety of free continuing medical education (CME) courses designed to enhance healthcare clinicians' knowledge of lupus and related conditions. These include case studies, multiple-choice questions, and activities covering topics such as reproductive health, lupus and pregnancy, and increasing minority participation in clinical trials.</li> <li>• <b><u>Teaching Fellows in Lupus Project</u></b> – The ACR's Teaching Fellows in Lupus Project aims to improve lupus diagnosis and treatment by enlisting rheumatology fellows-in-training to educate healthcare clinicians about lupus. The initiative addresses the limited lupus training outside rheumatology and the shortage of rheumatologists for ongoing education.</li> <li>• <b><u>Community Healthcare Workers</u></b> – The ACR's Community Health Worker (CHW) programs goal is to enhance lupus education and awareness among various communities. Programs like the Lupus Clinical Trials Training (LuCTT) and Illuminating Lupus Series are designed to increase CHWs' knowledge about lupus symptoms, improve patient support, and encourage minority participation in clinical trials.</li> </ul>
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Problem	Drivers	Relevant Society Strategies
<b>AIM 3: Improve clinical screening and monitoring for rheumatology patients</b>		
<p>Rheumatology patients often face a spectrum of interconnected health issues beyond joint pain, including systemic problems like fatigue and depression, and increased risks for cardiovascular and lung disease, infection, and osteoporosis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase awareness on the need for cardiovascular risk screening, primarily the perceived underuse or inconsistent application of ASCVD tools in rheumatology populations.</li> <li>• Develop toolkits for rheumatologists on the importance of monitoring and quality improvement. Information should include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A need for data standardization (core outcomes sets, consistent documentation).</li> <li>○ Protocolized lab monitoring (e.g., HCQ levels where clinically indicated).</li> <li>○ Adherence tracking (pill counts, pharmacy refill data, PROMIS-10 or similar PROMs, and digital reminders).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Develop and disseminate toolkits for PCPs to facilitate the primary care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">2026 RISE Registry Qualified Clinical Data Registry Quality Measures</a> – This summary PDF details ACR’s Qualified Clinical Data Registry (QCDR) quality measures available for quality performance tracking in the 2026 performance year via the ACR RISE registry. This includes the ACR’s eight rheumatology-specific measures for 2026. <i>Updated annually.</i> Learn more about the <a href="#">RISE registry</a>.</li> <li>• <b>Quality Improvement Resources</b> - RISE clinicians have access to resources to support quality improvement, implementation of best practices and guidelines into their clinical practice.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">SLE Quality Measure Implementation Guide</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) Measures Toolkit</a></li> <li>○ RISE Performance Improvement Activity – This ACCME activity allows clinicians up to 20.00 continuing education credits/Maintenance of Certification points for implementing and tracking a 90-day quality improvement activity.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Track and improve MIPS measures for rheumatology: <a href="#">Explore MIPS Value Pathways (MVPs) - QPP</a></li> <li>• <b>Disease Activity and Functional Status Assessments</b> – Routine assessments of disease activity and functional status are a key part of high-quality rheumatologic care. The ACR endorses five rheumatoid arthritis (RA) disease activity measures, as well as three RA functional status assessment measures for use in routine clinical practice.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Adaptation of American College of Rheumatology Rheumatoid Arthritis Disease Activity and Functional Status Measures for Telehealth Visits</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>of patients with rheumatological diseases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">2019 Update of the American College of Rheumatology Recommended Rheumatoid Arthritis Disease Activity Measures</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">2019 Recommended Rheumatoid Arthritis Disease Activity Measures Appendix</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">2019 American College of Rheumatology Recommended Patient-Reported Functional Status Assessment Measures in Rheumatoid Arthritis</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">2019 Recommended Patient Reported Functional Status Assessment Measures in Rheumatoid Arthritis Appendix</a></li> <li>● <b><a href="#">Rheumatology for Primary Care – Adult &amp; Pediatric Rheumatology Resources</a></b> - Whether you are wondering if you need to refer your patient to a rheumatologist, how urgent the request should be, or you are simply waiting for the consultation and want to further explore your patient's symptoms, get the support and answers you need with Rheumatology for Primary Care. This new online resource from the American College of Rheumatology (ACR) can help you better navigate the many conditions that adult and pediatric rheumatologists treat.</li> </ul>
Problem	Drivers	Relevant Society Strategies
<b>AIM 4: Reduce knowledge gaps.</b>		
<p>Physician knowledge gaps impede high quality care. These gaps include infectious causes of conditions, MAS/HLH, PJP prophylaxis, osteoporosis prevention and treatment, reproductive health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Engage fellowship program directors to address these gaps</li> <li>● Amplify the use of high-quality resources in journals, at meetings (e.g., ACR Convergence), and other learning opportunities to highlight and address these gaps</li> <li>● Increase awareness on the safe and appropriate use of AI to address knowledge gaps.</li> <li>● Work to determine whether individualized learning plans are an option for rheumatology to address diplomate-specific knowledge gaps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><a href="#">The Adult Rheumatology In-Training Examination (ITE)</a></b> provides program directors with valuable insights into the strengths and areas for improvement within their training programs. It also enables fellows to assess their individual progress and benchmark their performance against national results, as detailed in the score reports.</li> <li>● <b><a href="#">Virtual Rheumatology Program (V-FIT)</a></b> V-FIT is a collection of online courses developed by rheumatology experts to address specific education needs of fellows in training. There are courses for adult and pediatric rheumatology fellows.</li> <li>● <b><a href="#">Rheum4Science</a></b> The creation of Rheum4Science grew from the conviction that the teaching of science is declining in rheumatology. The target audience is rheumatology fellows in training, medical students, residents, practicing rheumatologists, and rheumatology healthcare clinicians.</li> <li>● <b><a href="#">Rheum2Learn 2.0</a></b> These case-based, online activities are a useful resource for residents and</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify meaningful ways to infuse the patient voice in educational resources.</li></ul>	internal medicine program directors during rheumatology rotation and rheumatology health professionals for self-study. Activities are complimentary.
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*\*Please submit any comments or questions you may have to [StrategicAlliances@abim.org](mailto:StrategicAlliances@abim.org). Thank you!*