

ACR
Convergence
Where Rheumatology Meets

*Patient
Perspectives*
PROGRAM GUIDELINES

rheumatology.org/annual-meeting-patient-perspectives

Guidelines for 2026 Patient Perspectives Program

Patient Perspectives Program Overview

The American College of Rheumatology (ACR) and the Association of Rheumatology Health Professionals (ARP) invite patients who have been impacted by rheumatic diseases, in conjunction with a patient sponsor organization, to submit their stories for the *Patient Perspectives Program*. These stories will allow patients affected by rheumatic disease to share their journeys and experiences living with rheumatic diseases with thousands of rheumatology healthcare providers worldwide.

New in 2026, the Patient Perspectives Program offers expanded opportunities for collaboration and participation. Patient presenting authors may indicate whether they wish to be paired with a physician collaborator for their session or prefer to present independently.

In addition, submissions may now be authored or co-authored by interprofessional partners (e.g., caregivers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, or other health professionals) or loved ones who support patients living with rheumatic diseases.

The ACR also has enhanced integration between patient voices and the ACR Convergence scientific program; rheumatologists presenting in General Scientific Sessions may invite or collaborate with a patient advocate to support their educational content where appropriate.

Accepted submissions for the Patient Perspectives session will be published in an official journal of the American College of Rheumatology, *Arthritis & Rheumatology*. Stories are considered for either a short oral presentation or poster presentation. Both oral and poster presenting authors will have the opportunity to present their story in-person at ACR Convergence (**November 6 –11, 2026**). Oral presentations will be featured in a didactic session, and posters will be presented in the Poster Hall. Presenting authors of oral and poster presentations will be provided complimentary registration to ACR Convergence 2026.

Patients who were selected to share a story or identified as a speaker collaborator with a physician and/or other interprofessional may receive financial support, if funding is available.

Important Dates

Submission

April 14, 2026

June 9, 2026

Late August

August 25, 2026

Patient Perspective Submission Site Opens
Patient Perspective Submission Site Closes (noon ET)
Submission Decision Notification
Deadline to Withdraw Submission Patient Perspectives Embargo Lifted (10:00 AM ET)

ACR Convergence 2026

November 7, 2026

November 11, 2026

Patient Perspectives Session (8:30 AM ET)

Need Help?

- Should you need technical support, please email support@gocadmium.com or call (410) 638-9239 between the hours of 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM ET, Monday–Friday to reach a support specialist.
- For general guideline inquiries regarding submission, email education@rheumatology.org

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Part I: Submission

Eligibility

Who Is Eligible to Submit?

- Members and non-members of the ACR and ARP are eligible to submit. **The presenting author is required to be someone who is living with a rheumatic disease and/or a caregiver of a patient who lives with a rheumatic disease.** All submissions are required to include a patient sponsor organization, such as a nonprofit patient group.
- Interprofessional partners and loved ones who support patients living with rheumatic diseases (e.g., caregivers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, social workers, and other health professionals) are eligible to serve as submitting authors. However, the *presenting author* must still be a patient impacted by a rheumatic disease. This ensures that lived experience remains central to the Patient Perspectives Program
- Employees/owners of an Ineligible Company are not eligible to be the presenting author or a listed author. An ineligible company is any entity producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.
- Organizations that meet the ACCE's definition of an ineligible company are not eligible to be sponsor organizations. Presenting authors (patient impacted by rheumatic disease and/or interprofessional caring for a patient with rheumatic disease) may only submit one story, but sponsor organizations may be included in multiple submissions.

What Is Eligible for Submission?

Submissions should meet one of the criteria below:

- Address the question: *"What adaptations did you and/or your healthcare team adopt to enhance care for your health?"*.
- Describe how you became more engaged in healthcare.
- Demonstrate an idea that was put into practice, and how the idea resulted in improved quality of life.
- Addresses how a medical professional can incorporate your findings into their everyday practice.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Interventions with exercise, diet, or lifestyle
- Use of complementary therapy (not medication-specific)
- Enhanced communication to impact your patient care
- Examples of engagement with health professional team
- Patient advocacy/research
- Impact of social media and/or support groups on your care or quality of life
- Other adaptations made by you and your healthcare team that you think other physicians and rheumatology health professionals should know more about.

What Is Not Eligible for Submission?

- Medication- or therapy-specific interventions will not be accepted.
- Submissions that report work that has been accepted for publication as a [manuscript](#) (e.g., full-length article, brief report, case report, concise communication or letter to the editor, etc.) *prior to the submission deadline of **noon ET on June 9*** are ineligible for consideration.

Submission Instructions

- All submissions must be made online.
- [Visit the online submission site to get started.](https://www.abstractscorecard.com/cfp/submit/loginSSO.asp?EventKey=NBQTRCHM) (<https://www.abstractscorecard.com/cfp/submit/loginSSO.asp?EventKey=NBQTRCHM>)
- Submitters will be able to access complete submission instructions and guidelines via the online submission site.
- During submission, presenting authors will be asked whether they prefer to collaborate with a physician (MD/DO) for their session and/or provide a physician of their choosing. Selecting this option does not impact the selection process or acceptance and is used solely for planning and pairing purposes.
- Each submission has a **\$20 processing fee**. The ACR accepts electronic payment only in the form of MasterCard, Visa, or American Express. Processing fees must be in U.S. funds. All fees are non-refundable—**no exceptions**. There are no refunds for rejected or withdrawn submissions.
- **SUBMISSION DEADLINE: June 9 noon Eastern Time—no exceptions.** *No changes may be made to your submission, including author information, after the deadline.*

Editorial Guidelines

Abbreviations

- Use standard abbreviations. A [list of acronyms](#) for many common rheumatology terms has been developed by an international group of rheumatology journal editors.
- Place abbreviations in parentheses after the first time the full word appears.
- Use numerals to indicate numbers, except when beginning sentences.

Character Limit

- Title character limit: 250 characters, excluding spaces.
- Body character limit: 2,750 characters, which EXCLUDES the title, names of authors/co-authors, authors' affiliations, spacing, and disclosures.
- Image, table, and/or graphic limit: There is a limit of three image, table, and/or graphic uploads per submission. Uploaded tables and/or graphics will not count towards the character limit.
- References in the submission body will be included against the character count.
- Submissions exceeding the character limit will be considered “incomplete.” Submissions marked “incomplete” at the close of the submission deadline will be ineligible for review.

Title

- Enter the title in the title field only, and do not enter the title in the body of the submission. When entered in the title field only, titles DO NOT count towards the 2,750 abstract body character limit.
 - Title character limit is 250 characters, excluding spaces.
 - Take special care when entering your title, as it may be published exactly as submitted.
- Titles should be brief, clearly indicating the nature of the presentation.
- Include only [commonly used acronyms](#) in the title.
- Do not reference any company/product brand names.
- When entering the title, use mixed case (do not use all caps OR all lowercase). Do not put a period at the end of the title. For example:

Correct:

- This Is a Properly Formatted Title

Incorrect:

- THIS IS AN IMPROPERLY FORMATTED TITLE
- This is an improperly formatted title
- T his is an imp roperly formatted title.
- This Is an Improperly Formatted Title

Authors

- **The presenting author should be a patient impacted by rheumatic disease.**
- To qualify for authorship, individuals must have made substantial contributions to conception and design of the submission.
- Do not list authors or commercial relationships in the body of the submission.
- Please consult your co-authors on how their names should appear prior to submission. You will not be able to make changes after the submission deadline.
- All authors must disclose any relevant financial relationship(s) at the time of submission.
- There is no limit on the number of authors who may be included in the author block.
- See the Disclosure Policy section below for additional author identification instructions.

Content

- Do not use new technical words, laboratory slang, words not defined in dictionaries, or abbreviations or terminology not consistent with internationally accepted guidelines. Product names should not be used; instead, the non-propriety (generic/scientific) name should be used.
- Refer to the list of [commonly used acronyms](#) for recommendations on acceptable terms for scientific communication.
- Define special or unusual abbreviations the first time they are used.
- Omit all names and geographical references in the body of the submission.
- Organize content in sections as follows. The submission form contains rich text boxes for each section, where content may be copy/pasted or typed directly. You do not need to include the section titles, which will be added automatically.
 - **Background/Purpose:** The presenting author (patient impacted by rheumatic disease) should explain their original diagnosis and treatment.
 - **Intervention:** The specific idea, change, or engagement should be described.
 - **Maintenance:** A summary of the results in the patient's health based on the changes made should be provided.
 - **Quality of Life:** Current patient quality of life should be described.
 - **Takeaway:** Comments, ideas, and methods that physicians can adapt to their everyday practice that supports your experience.

Images, Tables, and Graphics

- Up to three images are allowed.
- The maximum allowable size of each image is 2.5 MB.

- Images will be accepted as .jpg and .gif files.
- Please upload all tables as an image. This will help us ensure the consistent and accurate output of your submission at the time of publication.

Disclosure of Financial Relationships

- If there are relevant financial relationships, these must be mitigated in accordance with the ACR's CE Resolution of Conflict policy prior to the participation of the individual in the development or presentation of CE content.
- Submissions will not be eligible for review without proper completion of the Financial Relationships/disclosure section on the submission form.
- Accepted disclosures collected at the time of submission will be published on the ACR website.

Involvement of Individuals Not Listed as Authors

- Names of all individuals who had a substantial role in the development or preparation of the submission but are not included in the list of authors (such as a medical writer) must be disclosed in the body of the submission.
- For each individual, please describe the activity or activities (e.g., one or more of the activities included in the [authorship criteria](#) list).

Revisions

- You may return to the online submission site to revise your submission until **noon ET on June 9, 2026**.
- After this date/time, the submission site will close, and no additional changes, edits, revisions, etc. can be made to the title, content, author, or disclosure of information—no exceptions.
- Proofread carefully to avoid errors prior to submission.
- Selected submissions will be published online exactly as submitted.
- Should a submission contain errors or the omission of contributing author names after the deadline, presenters may opt to have the submission withdrawn. Refer to the Withdrawals section of this guide for instructions.

Withdrawals

- After August 25, presenting authors may submit a request to have a submission withdrawn.
- All requests for withdrawal must be submitted via email to: withdrawn@rheumatology.org.
- Withdrawal requests must include the following:
 - Submission ID Number
 - Submission Title
 - Author's Name
- Removal of a withdrawn submission from the online supplement of Arthritis & Rheumatology cannot be guaranteed if the request is received after August 25.

Review and Notification

Review

- After the submission deadline, completed submissions will be reviewed.
- Incomplete submissions cannot be processed and will not be reviewed.
- Revisions will not be accepted after the submission deadline—no exceptions.
- All reviewers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

- All submissions will be blinded for review, i.e., reviewed without knowledge of the author(s), institution(s), or disclosure information.

Acceptance/Rejection Notifications

- Both the presenting author (the patient impacted by rheumatic disease) and co-authors will receive initial notification of acceptance/rejection.
- After initial notification, co-authors will be referred to the presenting author for any additional questions. No further correspondence will occur between the ACR and co-authors. Should the presenting author be unresponsive after 30 days from first notification, ACR staff will contact the designated secondary contact author.

Registration

- Submission and acceptance of a story **does not automatically register** you for ACR Convergence.
- Following notification of acceptance, instructions will be provided on how to register for the meeting. If registrations are made in advance, refunds will not be provided.
- Both presenting authors (oral and posters) will be provided complimentary registration to ACR Convergence 2026.
- Learn more about registration on the [ACR website](#).

Part II: Presentation and Publication

Presentation

- Accepted submissions (Patient Perspective Stories) will be asked to develop a poster or an oral presentation. Detailed guidelines and instructions will be provided upon acceptance.
- If your Submission (Patient Perspective Story) is accepted as an Oral Presentation you will be asked to attend the session in-person in Orlando, Florida unless another provision is requested if you are unable to attend in-person.
- If your Submission (Patient Perspective Story) is accepted as a poster you will be asked to attend our in-person Poster Hall. You will also be asked to develop a poster .pdf for inclusion in the virtual poster gallery, which will be available to registered attendees through the meeting platform/app.
- Presenting authors who elect to collaborate with a physician during the submission process may be paired with an ACR-selected rheumatologist for appropriate sessions. Collaborations may include co-presented content, shared storytelling, or integration of clinical context alongside the patient narrative. Selecting or declining this option has no effect on acceptance.
- If you cannot attend in-person, your digital poster will still be shared on the meeting platform/app. Please note: No recordings or real-time discussions will be available with the digital online poster hall option. Detailed guidelines and instructions will be provided upon acceptance.
- As English is the designated language for the meeting, the presenting author (patient impacted by rheumatic disease) is required to speak English when discussing posters.

Publication

- Patient Perspective Stories will be published in an online supplement of [Arthritis &](#)

[Rheumatology](#), an official journal of the American College of Rheumatology.

- Patient Perspective Stories will be available on the [abstract site](#) several weeks before the meeting.
- Patients participating in Collaborative Talks with an interprofessional for a General Scientific Session are not provided with publication benefits. This benefit is solely provided for the Patient Perspective Story oral presenters.

Part III: Patient Participation in General Scientific Sessions

- To elevate the patient voice across the ACR Convergence program, rheumatologists presenting in General Clinical Scientific Sessions may collaborate with a patient, including a patient from the Patient Perspectives Program or a patient of their own choosing. These collaborations must comply with ACR disclosure, embargo, and conflict-of-interest policies and should enhance—rather than replace—scientific and educational objectives.

Part III: Policies

Relevant Financial Relationships

ACCE Standards and ACR Policy Regarding Third-Party Bias

- In accordance with ACCE requirements and ACR policy, submissions selected for poster presentation or oral presentation must be free of bias.
- Do not reference any company/product brand names during your presentation. University, non-profit association, or government agency logos are allowed in the body of your presentation.
- The ACR requires that educational materials that are part of an CE activity, such as slides, stories, and handouts, not contain any advertising, trade names, or a product group message.
- Disclosures must never include the use of a trade name or a product group message.
- For poster presentations, disclosures must be listed once at the bottom of the poster.

Disclosure Policy

- As a CE provider accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCE), the ACR must ensure balance, independence, objectivity, and scientific rigor in all its educational activities.
- To this end, the ACR requires that individuals (presenters/speakers, moderators, reviewers, authors, and planners) disclose to the planning committee, ACR, and audience any relevant financial relationships with Ineligible Companies that have the potential to affect the content of CE about the products or services of that ineligible company. In the case where such relationships exist, the ACR must mitigate the relevant financial relationship.
- If no financial relationships exist, individuals MUST STATE that NONE exists to reflect that the question was asked and answered.
- The ACCE defines relevant financial relationships as financial relationships in any amount, exists between the person in control of content and an ineligible company occurring within the past 24 months with ineligible companies:

Nature of Financial Relationships

None: Has no relevant financial relationship(s) with ineligible companies to disclose.

1. Advisor or Review Panel member
2. Consultant
3. Employee
4. Officer or Board Member
5. Grant/Research Support
6. Speaker/Honoraria includes speakers bureau, symposia, and expert witness
7. Independent Contractor
8. Ownership Interest
9. Royalties
10. Intellectual Property / Patents
11. Stock options or bond holdings in a for-profit corporation or self-directed pension plan
12. Private Investigator
13. Equity Interest
14. Expert Witness
15. Other Financial or Material Support

- Ineligible Company: is considered any entity whose primary business is producing, marketing, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients.
- Relevant Financial Relationships: exists between persons in control of the content and an ineligible company during the past 24 months. The content of the education is related to the products of an ineligible company with whom the person has a financial relationship.

ACR Embargo Policy

All Patient Perspective Stories are accepted to ACR Convergence are under media embargo once the ACR has notified presenters of their story's acceptance. They may be presented at other meetings or published as manuscripts after this time, but should not be discussed in non-scholarly venues or outlets. The following embargo policies are strictly enforced by the ACR.

Accepted Patient Perspective Stories are made available to the public online in advance of the meeting and are published in a special online supplement of our scientific journal, [Arthritis & Rheumatology](#). Information contained in those stories may not be released until the stories appear online. In an exception to the media embargo, academic institutions, private organizations, and companies with products whose value may be influenced by information contained in a story may issue a press release to coincide with the availability of an ACR story on the ACR website. However, the ACR continues to require that information that goes beyond that contained in the story (e.g., discussion of the story done as part of editorial news coverage) is under media embargo until **10 AM ET on Saturday, November 7**. Journalists with access to embargoed information cannot release articles or editorial news coverage before this time. Editorial news coverage is considered original articles/videos developed by employed journalists to report facts, commentary, and subject matter expert quotes in a narrative form using a variety of sources (e.g., research, announcements, press releases, events, etc.).

Violation of this policy may result in the story being withdrawn from the meeting and other measures deemed appropriate. Authors are responsible for notifying colleagues, institutions, communications firms, and all other stakeholders related to the development or promotion of the story about this policy.

If you have questions about the [ACR embargo policy](#), please contact ACR staff at education@rheumatology.org.

Copyright Policy

ACR Convergence 2026 is a private event. Programs presented at the meeting are for the education of attendees and purchasers of recorded presentations as authorized by the American College of Rheumatology. The information and materials displayed and presented during this meeting are the property of the ACR and the presenter and cannot be photographed, copied, photocopied, transformed to electronic format, reproduced, or distributed without written permission of the American College of Rheumatology and the presenter. Any use of the program content for commercial purposes, which includes, but is not limited to, oral presentations, audiovisual materials used by speakers, and program handouts, without the written consent of the ACR is prohibited. This policy applies before, during, and after the meeting. The ACR will enforce its intellectual property rights and penalize those who infringe upon it.

Permissions and Reprints

Copyright law covers all Patient Perspectives Stories published by the American College of Rheumatology. All rights reserved. No Patient Perspective Stories may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the prior permission of the publisher, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., except as permitted under section 107 and 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act.

For the purposes of this statement, the term Patient Perspective Stories refers to Patient Perspectives Stories as published in Arthritis & Rheumatology and posted online. For the purposes of this statement, the term Patient Perspective Posters refers to the accepted stories digital poster. This does not include Patient Perspective Story text as published in the online supplement of Arthritis & Rheumatology. All Patient Perspective Posters are the property of the ACR and the presenting author (patient impacted by rheumatic disease) and cannot be reproduced or distributed without written permission from the ACR and the presenting author.

For the purposes of this statement, the term “reproduce” includes all forms of reproduction, including, but not limited to, print, electronic, and photographed formats.

For the purposes of this statement, the term “presenting author” refers to the patient impacted by rheumatic disease, who is designated as the individual who will present the work during ACR Convergence 2026, as identified through the submission process.

Reprint Approval Process for Patient Perspective Stories

- Reprint requests for excerpts or the entirety of the actual stories published in the Arthritis & Rheumatology supplement are considered Patient Perspective Stories and must be submitted to Wiley
- Permission requests for story content and other permission inquiries should be addressed to:
Permissions Department c/o John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
111 River Street
Hoboken, NJ 07030
Fax: 201-748-6008

wiley.com/go/permissions

- Commercial entities seeking permission to reprint must obtain all materials from the author and/or publisher John Wiley & Sons, Inc. The ACR cannot provide any materials.

Reprint Approval Process for Patient Perspective Posters

- Requests to reproduce individual Patient Perspective digital posters, poster figures, or booklets of two or more poster presentations must be submitted via email to abstractreprints@rheumatology.org.
- Poster reproduction requests must include the following:
 - Poster ID Number
 - Poster Title
 - Presenting author's Name
 - A copy of Presenting author's written approval (email approval is acceptable)

Reproducing Patient Perspective Stories and Posters for Dissemination Prior to the ACR Convergence

- Requests to reproduce Patient Perspective Stories for dissemination prior to the annual meeting *will not be approved*.
- Per the [ACR Embargo Policy](#), academic institutions, private organizations, and companies with products whose value may be influenced by information contained in a story may issue a press release to coincide with the availability of a story online.
- Permission to issue a press release does not require ACR approval. However, it must comply with the [ACR Embargo Policy](#); violation of this policy may result in the story being withdrawn from the annual meeting or other measures deemed appropriate.
- For more information regarding press releases, please contact the ACR public relations department at pr@rheumatology.org.

Reproducing Patient Perspective Stories and Posters for Dissemination During ACR Convergence

- Following approval (see approval process above), an exhibiting organization may disseminate copies of individual Patient Perspective Stories from its exhibit space. Booklets of stories (e.g., two or more) may not be produced.
- Following approval, an exhibiting organization may disseminate information summaries (title/date/time/poster number) of Patient Perspective Stories from its exhibit space. Summaries may not reference company or product names. Requests for approval must be submitted in writing to abstractreprints@rheumatology.org.

Reproducing Patient Perspective Stories and Posters for Dissemination After ACR Convergence

Patient Perspective Stories

Following approval from Wiley (see approval process above), the ACR permits Patient Perspective Stories (i.e., all content published in the online supplement) to be reprinted and disseminated following the meeting.

- Patient Perspective Stories and booklets of Patient Perspective Stories (e.g., two or more) must include the following statement on the front of the story/booklet:
- Patient Perspective Story(ies) reprinted from ACR Convergence 2026, ACR's annual meeting, held November 6-11. The American College of Rheumatology does not guarantee, warrant, or endorse any commercial products or services. Reprinted by (insert name of supporting company).

- Booklets cannot contain corporate or product logos or any advertisements. No exceptions.

Patient Perspective Posters

Following approval from the presenting author and the ACR (see approval process above), copies of actual Patient Perspective Posters (i.e., images from the poster presentation) may be reproduced.

- Reprint requests for the actual text published in the Arthritis & Rheumatology supplement are considered Patient Perspective Stories and must be submitted to Wiley (see approval process above).
- IMPORTANT: The ACR does not retain and cannot provide poster presentation images.
- The following statement must be listed under each poster reprint:
Reprinted from ACR Convergence 2026, held November 6 - 11 The American College of Rheumatology does not guarantee, warrant, or endorse any commercial products or services. Reprinted by (insert name of supporting company).

Media

Credentialed media attend the meeting to cover stories for consumer, trade, and other media outlets. For information on what press are able to access and their permitted activities, please visit:

[rheumatology.org/Annual-Meeting/Press](https://www.rheumatology.org/Annual-Meeting/Press).

Content Use

Use of the ACR Name

The names, insignias, logos, and acronyms of the ACR, the ARP, the Rheumatology Research Foundation and ACR Convergence are proprietary marks. Use of the names in any fashion, by any entity, for any purpose, are prohibited without the express written permission of the American College of Rheumatology.

Use of the ACR Scientific Program Content

- Information displayed or presented at all sessions during the annual meeting is the property of the ACR or the presenter. Information may not be recorded, photographed, copied, photocopied, transferred to electronic format, reproduced, or distributed without the prior written permission of the ACR and the presenter.
- Any use of the program content, including all oral presentations, audio-visual materials used by speakers, and program handouts, is prohibited without the written consent of the ACR.
- The ACR's intellectual property rights policy applies before, during, and after the annual meeting. Violators may be penalized.

Use of the ACR Disclosure Key

It is suggested when referencing disclosures in the reprints, that the ACR's disclosure key be added to provide adequate context:

Nature of Financial Relationships

None: Has no relevant financial relationship(s) with ineligible companies to disclose.

1. Advisor or Review Panel member
2. Consultant
3. Employee
4. Officer or Board Member

5. Grant/Research Support
6. Speaker/Honoraria includes speakers bureau, symposia, and expert witness
7. Independent Contractor
8. Ownership Interest
9. Royalties
10. Intellectual Property / Patents
11. Stock options or bond holdings in a for-profit corporation or self-directed pension plan
12. Private Investigator
13. Equity Interest
14. Expert Witness
15. Other Financial or Material Support