The Quarterly Dispatch

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF ARIZONA & LONE STAR ARTHRITIS & RHEUMATOLOGY ASSOCIATES

Lone Star Arthritis

Congratulations to Dr. Reddy for receiving the Top Doc in 360West magazine.

This award recognizes physicians who stand out in their field, based on votes from their peers. Each year, doctors are asked to nominate fellow doctors who demonstrate excellence across their specialty.

Stay tuned for the article release in March of 2026

Quarterly Wellness Initiatives

FINANCIAL WELLNESS

NATIONAL BLOOD DONAR MONTH

AMERICAN HEART HEALTH MONTH

HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

Congratulations to Dr. Chudhri, for being the Arthritis Foundations 2025 Medical Honoree for the Jingle Bell Run!

We had an amazing time coming together to support the nearly 60 million adults and hundreds of thousands of children living with arthritis. While the event may be over, your impact doesn't have to stop. We encourage you to continue your incredible fundraising and consider making a donation to keep the momentum going.

We at AARA and LSARA personally saw a fantastic turnout and are deeply grateful to everyone who came out to show their support for the arthritis community. Thank you for all that you do.

Technology Updates

Chris Uribe is the new IT manager over the technicians! He's no stranger to AARA/LSARA as he's been working behind the scenes as a consultant for a few years.

We've got some big initiatives coming up like moving the Gilbert clinic and implementing two-factor-authentication for everyone.

Also, the NextGen version 8 upgrade was pretty brutal but there is a patch coming around the corner that should bring back some features we lost like showing the full list of documents/templates in the encounter from the main screen.

As always, please contact IT at extension 5000 or https://helpdesk.azarthritis.com if you need help. We're available Mon-Fri 4am to 10pm MST.

Rheumera

We are developing our Principal Care Management (PCM) program in preparation for a pilot launch in early to mid-February for RA patients under the care of Dr. Bilal and Dr. Soloman's teams.
PCM enrollment will provide the same level of clinical oversight and structured care as our Rheumera app program. However, this pathway is designed specifically for patients who are unable or prefer not to engage with the technology component.
Instead of app-based monitoring, enrolled patients will receive direct, proactive, and focused outreach from the Rheumera team. Outreach will follow a provider-designated care plan, ensuring continuity, clinical oversight, and consistent support aligned with the patient's individualized treatment goals.
This pilot will allow us to expand access to high-touch care management while maintaining the same standard of quality and accountability established through the Rheumera program.

Patient Experience Department

We are currently evaluating a new referral management system designed to streamline how we process and track incoming referrals. This system will leverage AI to automatically identify key information such as patient location, diagnosis, and referring provider — significantly reducing the need for manual tracking of outbound referral efforts by staff.

By automating intake and categorization, we anticipate improved efficiency, greater visibility into referral patterns, and more consistent follow-up processes across teams.

We are targeting implementation in early Q2 and look forward to sharing additional details as the evaluation progresses.

Revenue Cycle Update: Strengthening the Front End of Care

Starting with a pilot in Texas and expanding to AARA next quarter, our Revenue Cycle team is absorbing eligibility and referral functions and rolling out a new "Chart Prepper" model. This proactive approach allows us to review patient accounts ahead of appointments to confirm insurance, referral requirements, and balances—helping prevent last-minute issues and improving the overall visit experience.

For patients, this means earlier communication and fewer surprises at check-in. For our front desk and operations teams, it reduces day-of-visit stress, reschedules, and rework, allowing staff to focus more on patient support. From a financial perspective, addressing issues upfront helps prevent denials, protect timely filing, and accelerate clean claims—strengthening the organization's overall financial health.

This expansion reflects our commitment to supporting patients, clinic teams, and long-term operational and financial stability across the organization.

Aetna 2025 Workplace Well-being Award

AARA has been recognized by Banner|Aetna with Aetna's 2025 Workplace Well-being Award.

This achievement recognizes employers that develop employee health and wellness programs that support their people in meaningful and measurable ways. These support mechanisms come in the form of expanded access to benefits, increased employee engagement, and beyond!

AARA recognizes that improved patient outcomes are driven in part by care teams performing at their very best. We are proud to not only be recognized for our efforts in improving the well-being of our patients but for our employees as well.

Research Department

We're excited to share a major milestone from our research team—Dr. Tesser & Henry Geronimo of Avondale Research have successfully randomized our very first subject in the Cullinan trial.

The Cullinan Trial is for SLE trial with a novel therapy that aims to provide long term therapy and is unlike any other medications that require retreatment to remain effective.

This accomplishment reinforces our team's consistent delivery across high-complexity autoimmune trials and reflects our commitment to advancing innovative therapies in SLE.