



## **Arthritis Alliance of Canada and the College of Family Physicians of Canada launch tool to improve care for 4.4 million Canadians living with osteoarthritis**

**September 18, 2017**

Toronto, ON - The [Arthritis Alliance of Canada \(AAC\)](#) and the [College of Family Physicians of Canada \(CFPC\)](#) today launched the [Osteoarthritis Tool](#). The tool is designed to give health care providers the key professional knowledge and skills necessary to effectively diagnose and facilitate the management of patients living with osteoarthritis (OA).

The AAC and CFPC worked with health care providers—physicians, physiotherapists, and pharmacists, in conjunction with world-renowned OA experts—to develop the Osteoarthritis Tool for primary care. This seven-page, easy-to-navigate tool will help clinicians identify symptoms and provide evidence-based, goal-oriented, non-pharmacological and pharmacological management while identifying triggers for investigations or referrals. Healthcare providers will have a standardized approach to identify symptoms and recommend therapies to help relieve pain and improve physical functioning, while also providing patients with high quality education to support their active role in self-care.

A recent study found the rising rates of OA will cost the Canadian economy an estimated \$17.5 billion a year in lost productivity by 2031, as the disease forces greater numbers of people to stop working or work less.\* There are currently more than 4 million Canadians living with OA. Within a generation (in 30 years), more than 10 million (or one in four) Canadians are expected to have OA.

“The Osteoarthritis Tool arrives at a critical time. OA—particularly knee OA—is one of the fastest growing chronic conditions worldwide, due to rising numbers with obesity and knee injury and increasing lifespan. While effective therapies exist, the high prevalence of other medical conditions in people with OA makes management challenging (“as many as 90 per cent of people with OA have at least one additional chronic condition—most often diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure”), states Dr. Gillian Hawker, Rheumatologist and Professor of Medicine, University of Toronto.

“Canadians living with osteoarthritis typically first seek advice from their family doctor or other health care provider,” says Gunita Mitera, Director of Programs and Practice Support at CFPC. “The new Osteoarthritis Tool provides an effective standardized resource to support family physicians in identifying and managing the condition”.

\*Sharif B, Garner R, Hennessy D, Sanmartin C, Flanagan WM, Marshall DA. Productivity costs of work loss associated with osteoarthritis in Canada from 2010 to 2031. *Osteoarthritis Cartilage* 2017;25(2):249-258.

## **ABOUT THE ARTHRITIS ALLIANCE OF CANADA**

The Arthritis Alliance of Canada, formed in 2002, is pan-Canadian assembly of arthritis stakeholders working collectively to improve the lives of people living with arthritis. While each member organization continues its own work, the Alliance provides a central focus for national arthritis-related initiatives. For more information, visit [www.arthritisalliance.ca](http://www.arthritisalliance.ca).

## **ABOUT THE COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS OF CANADA**

The CFPC represents more than 35,000 members across the country. It is the professional organization responsible for establishing standards for the training and certification of family physicians. The CFPC reviews and accredits continuing professional development programs and materials that enable family physicians to meet certification and licencing requirements and lifelong learning interests. It also accredits postgraduate family medicine training in Canada's 17 medical schools. The College provides quality services, supports family medicine teaching and research, and advocates on behalf of family physicians and the specialty of family medicine.

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