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ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES TOP 10 ARTHRITIS ADVANCES OF 2006

-- Predictions for the Years Ahead --

ATLANTA, January 11, 2007 – A team of scientists recently released research results showing a significant association between the presence of a specific gene (PTPN22) and rheumatoid arthritis. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also approved a new treatment option for people with rheumatoid arthritis – *Rituxan*, a biologic response modifier used to treat inflammatory arthritis. These are just two of the top 10 most significant arthritis advances of 2006, according to the Arthritis Foundation.

The Arthritis Foundation's Top 10 Arthritis Advances also includes less encouraging, yet noteworthy news. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates arthritis cases will increase from 46 million this year to nearly 67 million (25 percent of the adult population) by the year 2030. Also making the Arthritis Foundation's Top 10 Arthritis Advances is the discovery that children with juvenile arthritis have a high rate of relapse, despite treatment.

“As the baby boomer generation ages, and the number of people with arthritis dramatically increases over next decade, advances in research and the development of more effective and safer treatments are critical to helping improve quality of life for millions of people with arthritis,” said John H. Klippel, M.D., president and CEO of the Arthritis Foundation. “The Arthritis Foundation provides more funding for arthritis research than any other private, non-profit organization in the world – a distinguishing characteristic that offers unparalleled support for innovative research and the development of new treatment options for a growing population of people affected by the disease.”

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The Top 10 Arthritis Advances Include:

- Dramatic Surge in Arthritis Predicted
- Genetic Links with Rheumatoid Arthritis Identified
- Effectiveness of Biologics in Arthritis
- Importance of Anti-Cyclic Citrullinated Proteins in RA
- Results of Largest Glucosamine-Chondroitin Trial to Date
- High Rate of Relapse in Juvenile Arthritis
- Immune Cell Involvement in Juvenile Arthritis Better Defined
- Help for Seniors Buying Medications
- New Treatment Possibilities for Systemic Sclerosis
- Anakinra Effective Against Genetic Form of Juvenile Arthritis

Summaries of each of the top arthritis advances, as well as what they mean for people living with the disease in the year ahead, are available at www.arthritis.org. To develop its annual list of the Top 10 Arthritis Advances, the Arthritis Foundation sought input from clinicians with expertise in various forms of arthritis, scientists from a wide variety of research disciplines, and organizations with an interest in arthritis and related diseases.

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About The Arthritis Foundation

The Arthritis Foundation is the leading health organization addressing the needs of some 46 million Americans living with arthritis, the nation's number-one cause of disability. Founded in 1948, with headquarters in Atlanta, the Arthritis Foundation has 46 chapters and 150 community service points located throughout the country.

The Arthritis Foundation is the largest private, not-for-profit contributor to arthritis research in the world, funding more than \$380 million in research grants since 1948. The foundation helps individuals take control of arthritis by providing public health education; pursuing public policy and legislation; and conducting evidence-based programs to improve the quality of life for those living with arthritis. Information is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-800-568-4045 or www.arthritis.org.