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Novel Pilot Program Delivers Tools to Accelerate Lupus Diagnosis and Treatment

“Teaching Fellows in Lupus” Educates Healthcare Providers in Four Major U.S. Cities

Amy had symptoms since she was 15. Pleurisy, extreme fatigue, a minor heart attack. But not until she landed in the emergency room at 23 with swollen hands resembling mini footballs did one nurse consider lupus. **Amy’s experience is all too common.**

When illness first strikes, patients typically head to their primary care doctor, community health center or emergency room where lupus is all too often overlooked. Presenting with symptoms that mimic many other diseases, a lupus sufferer poses a considerable challenge to front-line healthcare providers with little training in autoimmune disease and lupus. Among underserved urban and minority populations, the likelihood of misdiagnosis is even greater.



Teaching Fellows in Lupus, a [new partnership program](#) of the Lupus Research Institute (LRI) and the American College of Rheumatology (ACR), aims to alleviate racial disparities and reduce the time to diagnose and treat lupus by giving providers the tools they need to recognize symptoms and refer patients on to proper treatment and specialist care.

As a pilot rolling out under the federally-funded professional education program, the [Lupus Initiative](#), “Teaching Fellows in Lupus” enlists rheumatology fellows (rheumatologists in training) as educators.

It tests the new teaching model in four cities with different healthcare systems -- Atlanta, Chicago, San Francisco and New York. To date participants have included [nearly 200 practicing providers](#) from community health centers to large hospital systems.

“Teaching Fellows in Lupus pilots an innovative approach to implementing the Lupus Initiative in areas with high minority populations that are at higher risk for lupus,” noted Dr. S. Sam Lim, Associate Professor of Medicine at Emory University School of Medicine, and Chief of Service for Rheumatology at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta. As Chairman of the Lupus Initiative Consortium and the program’s champion since inception, Dr. Lim continues to provide leadership in its execution and evaluation. “Having developed an excellent curriculum, we now have the tools to educate healthcare

professionals and medical students, and *Teaching Fellows in Lupus* is the first step in bringing these quality tools nationwide."

In addition to Dr. Lim, *Teaching Fellows in Lupus* is also led by the following consortium of leaders in the lupus field:

- Dr. Roz Ramsey Goldman, Solovy/Arthritis Research Society Research Professor, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine; Medical Director, Northwestern Memorial Hospital Clinical Research Unit
- Dr. Maria Dall'Era, Director of the Lupus Clinic and Department of Clinical Trials Center, University of California, San Francisco
- Dr. Amanda Sammut, Assistant Clinical Professor of Medicine, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons; Chief of Rheumatology, Harlem Hospital, Health and Hospitals Corporation (HCC)

Special Note to Healthcare Providers Interested in “Teaching Fellows in Lupus”

Healthcare providers wishing to schedule training seminars in New York, Chicago, Atlanta and San Francisco should contact Project Director Amy Caron at acaron@lupusny.org, 212.812.3881.

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About the Lupus Research Institute

The world's leading private supporter of innovative research in lupus, the LRI champions scientific risk-taking in the hunt for solutions to this complex and dangerous autoimmune disease.

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