



Alliance for Lupus Research
PREVENT. TREAT. CURE.

For the Alliance for Lupus Research
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Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. Joins the Quest to Cure Lupus

Washington, D.C., 02/27/08— Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL) will join the Alliance for Lupus Research (ALR) at the ALR's 2008 *Working Together for a Cure* National Awards Dinner. *Working Together for a Cure* will take place Monday, March 3, 2008, at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, in Washington, D.C. ALR's Chairman, Robert Wood Johnson, IV, and ALR's President, Barbara Boyts, will present the Congressman with ALR's Public Achievement Award, in celebration of his dedication to eliminating health disparities in our nation. *Working Together for a Cure* is part of ALR's National Volunteer Meeting and Advocacy Day, a three-day gathering of hundreds of ALR volunteer advocates from over 23 states across country. The meeting's objective is to raise Congressional awareness of the need for increased federal funding for lupus research.

"I am honored to join the quest for a cure for lupus, a devastating autoimmune disease that largely affects women and minorities -- a disproportionate number of my constituency and a growing number of military personnel and veterans and their family members," says Congressman Jackson. "We owe it to our troops to fund disease-specific initiatives and I applaud the efforts of the Department of Defense for currently funding lupus research initiatives that will have particular impact on our women and minorities -- whether they are on the battlefield or in their homes and businesses. I will do everything to ensure that the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities also examines ways to address this American health crisis," he continues.

Lupus causes unpredictable symptoms ranging from fatigue and joint pain to severe organ damage and, too often, can be fatal. Women are nine times more likely than men to develop the condition. Women of African-American descent are three times more likely to be diagnosed with the disease. Asian, Hispanic and women from the Pacific Rim are also more likely to be affected. Most discouragingly, "African-American women, aged 45 to 64, not only have the highest death rate (of people with lupus), but they have the biggest increase in death rates over the past 20 years. It went up nearly 70 percent, and that's startling information," states Dr. Charles Helmick, the Center for Disease Control's Medical Epidemiologist.

"As Dr. Helmick describes, lupus hits hardest a traditionally medically-underserved portion of America's population," says Barbara Boyts, ALR's President, "so we are thrilled to have an ally such as Congressman Jackson helping to raise the profile of the disease and the work of the ALR."

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p. 2

In 2004, ALR achieved an important public policy milestone when it initiated and organized the effort to include lupus as one of the diseases eligible for funding through the Department of Defense (DoD) FY 05 appropriations for its Peer Reviewed Medical Research Program (PRMRP). This marked the first time lupus would be included, with 22 other topic areas, in this annually-funded program. Due to ALR's efforts and increased public, media and academic attention on lupus, DoD continues to focus and expand its research investment in this disease. The DoD has so far awarded \$5.1 million to lupus researchers. Of the five lupus research projects currently funded by the PRMRP, three of the projects' proposal data was supported by previous ALR funding. The ALR continues to work closely with Members of Congress to ensure that federal funding for lupus research remains a priority in future fiscal year appropriations.

Event Details:

Alliance for Lupus Research 2008 *Working Together for a Cure* National Awards Dinner
March 3, 2008, 6 p.m., Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW
Contact: Sam Rogers, 646.884.6091, or srogers@lupusresearch.org

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The Alliance for Lupus Research (ALR) is a national voluntary health organization based in New York City and founded in 1999. Chaired by Robert Wood Johnson IV, it has become the world's largest private source of lupus research funds and has committed \$50 million to lupus-specific research projects since its inception. The organization's mission is to find better treatments and ultimately prevent and cure lupus by supporting medical research. Because the ALR's Board of Directors pays for all administrative and fundraising costs, 100% of all donations go directly to support lupus research programs. For more information, visit www.lupusresearch.org.