

Lupus Foundation of America, Georgia Chapter Mission Summary

The impact on the Georgians we serve, inspire and empower and our story of growth is compelling. The chapter is the fastest growing chapter in the LFA network, with the highest chapter revenue and the largest program network serving as a lifeline and a voice of hope raising awareness and fighting for the 55,000 Georgians living with lupus. The growth of our volunteer leadership in the medical and the corporate community has led to the expansion of programs and the chapter's events and awareness efforts, reaching new physicians, patients and new communities.

As the only statewide valuable resource for the lupus community, the Georgia Chapter provides thousands with free, valuable educational information, physician referrals, resources, support groups and educational programs reaching patients in 121 of the 159 counties in Georgia. Ninety percent of every dollar donated stays in Georgia to support our programs. The chapter also supports the national research efforts of the Lupus Foundation of America, working to advance the science and medicine of lupus to bring down the barriers that have impeded progress in lupus research.

Despite its prevalence, lupus remains one of the least recognizable and most misunderstood diseases in both the medical and lay communities. There is no known cause, no cure, and the incidence has increased hugely in the past 20 years. Current treatments are often very toxic, the side effects often rivaling the symptoms of the disease.

We reach out to our lupus constituents and their families with our year round chapter programs and events and in a variety of ways, from direct mail to online emails blasts, website updates and information placement in doctors' offices:

- Over 40,000 visitors to our website in this past year.
- Over 1,900 inquiries and chapter responses from patients and families for information, resources and referrals.
- More than 17,000 Social Media fans.
- More than 65,000 constituents in our database.
- More than 35,000 constituents in our email database.
- In the past year, more than 500 people attended our symposiums and seminars in major markets across the state.
- Our support groups have had an attendance of at least 3,000 in more than 30 communities.
- More than 200 people have registered for our teleconference services with an additional 2,200 hits to our website for the taped recordings and information.
- 200,000 What is Lupus? Brochures, in English and Spanish already distributed in doctors' offices across Georgia.
- 7,500 walkers and families were inspired and empowered at the 2019 Atlanta Walk to End Lupus Now, one of the largest LFA walk in the nation.
- 500 walkers and families raising funds and awareness at our 2019 Columbus Walk to End Lupus Now.
- Over 200 guests at our 2019 Night of Hope Gala.

Our key accomplishments in 2019 include:

- Education: The Georgia Lupus Summit, held at the Renaissance Waverly Hotel, with over 260 attendees and eighteen breakout sessions, was presented simultaneously in English and Spanish.
- Patient Resources: We held our sixth Support Group Retreat to train 27 Support Group Facilitators as professional activists in communities across Georgia.
- Advocacy: In February 2019, we advocated for \$100,000 in research funds in Georgia. The funds were approved for fiscal 2019.
- Emergency Financial Assistance: The Georgia Chapter distributed funds to help people living with lupus who were in financial crisis. The Chapter paid utility bills, co-payments for doctor visits, rent and much all the while counseling our constituents to help them find sustainable resources. We have awarded more than \$79,000 in assistance since 2014.

Our Chapter goals for growth in 2020 include the following:

- Continue to expand our educational programs and resources to new communities. In addition we plan to host a new Summer Series in Summer 2020 with one topic seminars hosted during the work week around Atlanta.
- Increase awareness and support of our programs in the doctor's offices of our Medical Advisory Board, (MAB) members and increase support and participation of our MAB members in our programs.
- Expand our support group training retreat to include community networking and partnership building training along with the new title of our Support Group Network – the Georgia Community Network.
- Work with our Support Group leaders to grow community awareness and grassroots advocacy efforts.
- Continue to support our Lupus Parent Project, a support network for parents, working in partnership with Childrens' Hospital of Atlanta.
- Partner with HBCU's to bring awareness of the signs and symptoms o lupus to those who are most affected by this disease.
- Build on the success of our State Advocacy efforts and our Lupus Bill in 2014 to ensure the continued increased awareness of Lupus at the State level and the establishment of the Lupus Council. We plan to host a walk team from the State Legislatures.
- Partner with the Georgia Council on Lupus Education and Awareness to educate school nurses and to expand telemedicine for rheumatology patients in Georgia.
- Continue to grow our Lupus@Work initiative with presentations to support people living with lupus where they work.
- Build corporate teams within the Atlanta business community for the 2020 Walk to End Lupus Now and increase the fundraising efforts of all our teams.
- Increase corporate sponsorship and attendance at our Night of Hope Gala.
- Add two additional walks in Augusta and Macon in September 2020.

Funding ensures the continued growth of our education programs, awareness and patient support efforts, providing vital resources in the management and treatment of lupus. The 55,000 Georgians with lupus and their families need multiple opportunities across a variety of platforms to learn from medical experts and professionals presenting information on various topics. Our year round advocacy and events inspire and empower those touched by lupus, ensuring they know they are not alone and that people care and lupus matters.

Ten years ago, no one spoke of lupus, there was little awareness and understanding of the signs and symptoms and very little investment in research. No one and no organ is safe. We have made great progress, but we must do more as we have lost so many of all ages and we cannot rest. We are relentless and endless, but so is lupus.

We have barely begun and we will reach even higher heights in the next 1-2 years.