

# Access to Care is Critical to Health Outcomes



Nearly 300,000 children in the United States have arthritis or a related disease. Arthritis can be a feature of many different childhood chronic illnesses such as juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (JRA), systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), dermatomyositis (JDMS), scleroderma, vasculitis and immunodeficiencies.

These illnesses can affect the physical, psychological, social and intellectual development of a child. It is important for children with arthritis to have access to family-centered comprehensive specialized pediatric arthritis care and pediatric rheumatologists, who specialize in treating children with these chronic diseases.

Access to care is a critical issue. Carol Lindsley, MD, of the University of Kansas Medical Center, is one of fewer than 200 pediatric rheumatologists in the United States. To treat children with arthritis and related diseases she has established a network of pediatric arthritis outreach clinics. Fourteen U.S. states have no access to a pediatric rheumatologist.



**CAROL LINDSLEY, MD** (left), with twins Emily & Ashley Matthews and their mother

Emily and Ashley are 10 year-old twins who were diagnosed with juvenile dermatomyositis (JDMS) at age 5. Two children in a family with JDMS is very uncommon. They see Dr. Lindsley and her health care team at an outreach clinic. Apart from the benefits of having medical care close at hand, receiving care at the pediatric arthritis outreach clinic allows Emily and Ashley to miss less school, and their parents to miss less work.

Emily and Ashley have learned to take control of their chronic disease, and they have become advocates for others with arthritis. They have traveled to Washington, D.C. to tell their story to legislators, and to advocate for arthritis research and access to care.

The United States Bone and Joint Decade (USBJD), with the active participation of nearly 100 patient and healthcare professional organizations, over 90 medical schools and colleges of medicine, the Federal Government and all 50 states, is committed to advancing the understanding and treatment of arthritis, as well as other important bone and joint conditions such as back pain, osteoporosis, and major limb trauma.

For more information on the Decade and its activities: [www.usbjd.org](http://www.usbjd.org)



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