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AARDA PRAISES PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA AND REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC LAWMAKERS FOR NEW “21ST CENTURY CURES” LAW

Calls Legislation “the Best Christmas Present” for Autoimmune and Chronic Disease Patients

DETROIT, December 13, 2016 – American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association (AARDA) applauds Congressional leaders in Washington, D.C. for the bipartisan “21st Century Cures” Act which was signed into law by President Barack Obama today.

The \$6.3 billion “game-changing” health care legislation is intended to expedite the discovery, development and delivery of new treatments and cures and maintain America’s global status as the leader in biomedical innovation.

“Autoimmune diseases need cures,” said Virginia T. Ladd, Founder and Executive Director, AARDA. “Although there are treatments for many of the autoimmune diseases that can alleviate symptoms, few available treatments actually alter the course of an autoimmune disease. Most treatments for autoimmune diseases must be taken on a continuous basis, often for a lifetime. Although many of the treatments can have serious and undesirable side effects, patients are left with no other choice than to tolerate the treatments as they live with their chronic illnesses. Cures are needed. Research funding is crucial to finding cures.”

AARDA has been advocating on behalf of the bill along with more than 250 health organizations for several years. They believe the patient-focused bill will “advance the discovery and development of treatments, strengthen the patient voice in the regulatory environment, increase funding for the National Institutes of Health and Food and Drug Administration, and greatly improve our innovation ecosystem.”

“AARDA supports legislation that holds the promise of future cures and includes reforms that will lessen the time currently seen to achieve effective treatments. The timing of this new law makes it the best Christmas present for autoimmune patients,” said Ladd.

About Autoimmune Disease

There are more than 100 known autoimmune diseases (ADs), including psoriasis, Graves' disease, Sjogren's syndrome, Type 1 diabetes, relapsing polychondritis, myasthenia gravis, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease and lupus. The underlying cause of all of these diseases is autoimmunity which disproportionately affects women. Of the 50 million Americans living and coping with ADs, more than 75 percent are women. Given the genetic component, autoimmune diseases can run in families. AD is one of the top 10 leading causes of death of women under the age of 65 and is responsible for more than \$100 billion in direct health care costs annually.

About American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association (AARDA) is the nation's only non-profit organization dedicated to bringing a national focus to autoimmunity as a category of disease and a major women's health issue, and promoting a collaborative research effort in order to find better treatments and a cure for all autoimmune diseases. For more information, please visit www.aarda.org.

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