



2020

YEAR IN REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Alliance for Patient Access stood shoulder-to-shoulder with partner organizations in 2020 to adapt to the new normal. With collaboration and resilience, GAfPA found innovative ways to continue advocating for patient-centered care across the globe. Issues included:



COVID-19 & Patient Access

GAfPA worked to ensure continued collaboration among policymakers, clinicians, the private sector, academics and patient advocates to best serve the needs of patients.



Continuity of Care

Not only patients with COVID-19 but also patients facing chronic and non-communicable diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes and arthritis encountered unprecedented disruptions and challenges to care.



Value & Innovation

GAfPA worked to keep the voices and values of patients at the forefront of decision-making and to inform policies that continue to encourage innovation.

With the help of virtual platforms and innovative outreach, GAfPA forged ahead on core initiatives in Europe and Latin America, while also expanding its advocacy into South Africa for the first time. GAfPA hosted virtual events that explored:

- **Cardiovascular Health**
- **Cancer**
- **Neurological Diseases**
- **Innovation & Value**
- **Rheumatic & Musculoskeletal Diseases**

Despite the year's disruptions and challenges, GAfPA continued its efforts to collaborate with partners, patient advocates and clinicians to inform the policy dialogue around patient-centered care.



2020 IMPACT

In-person events may have been limited, but creative use of online platforms allowed GAFPA to nevertheless elevate issues of patient-centered care across the globe. Statistics from 2020 tell the story of bold and collaborative organizations committed to advocacy no matter the circumstances.

5 
WEBINARS

406 
ATTENDEES


159 
PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

4 
POLICY PAPERS

14 
BLOG POSTS

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACT


ENGAGEMENTS
82,330


IMPRESSIONS
1.5 MILLION


FOLLOWERS
15,166



CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

Access to patient-centered cardiovascular care continued to be a priority for GAfPA in 2020.

Continuity of Care During COVID-19

The year saw fear of exposure to COVID-19 keep many patients at home, skipping necessary appointments and delaying treatment. In response, the Global Alliance for Patient Access partnered with FH Europe and other international organizations on the #JustGo initiative. The campaign reminded people that staying home may not be the safest option, especially when it comes to heart health.

Addressing High Cholesterol

The Global Alliance for Patient Access also took advantage of the virtual platforms to host several online events and meetings about cardiovascular health across both Europe and South Africa. For example, GAfPA hosted a virtual event in October with Belgium stakeholders on “Closing the Gap in Cardiovascular Care,” which explored how to drive better care in Belgium for familial hypercholesterolemia and cholesterol management for cardiovascular disease prevention.

Identifying Unmet Needs

In 2020, the Global Alliance for Patient Access also expanded its work into Africa, hosting a virtual kick-off meeting for the South African Cardiovascular Disease Working Group. The meeting brought together lipid experts, FH leaders, public health and patient advocates, and scientific associations to establish policy priorities in the region.

GAfPA also collaborated this year with the global FH community to champion a set of public policy recommendations for reducing the burden of familial hypercholesterolemia.

RESOURCES



INFOGRAPHICS

- ▶ 9 Policy Priorities for Improving FH Care



BLOG POSTS

- ▶ Cardiovascular Advocates Elevate Global Call to Action
- ▶ Why Heart Patients Should “Just Go”
- ▶ What the World Can Do About Genetic High Cholesterol



CANCER & NEUROLOGICAL DISEASES

The pandemic fueled drastic gaps in care among patients with chronic and non-communicable diseases such as cancer.

Continuity of Cancer Care

In response, GAfPA convened cancer patient advocacy groups from Latin America for a virtual meeting titled “Navigating Cancer Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

The webinar featured patients’ perspectives, identified specific barriers to care and explored the health implications of delaying cancer care. The discussion underscored one critical reality: cancer does not wait. Patients who choose to stay home rather than seek treatment due to the fear of exposure to COVID-19 may inadvertently exchange one health risk for another. Advocates agreed that health systems need to ensure that non-COVID patients can continue to receive the treatment and care that they need to survive.

Neurological Disease Challenges

Meanwhile, patients with other non-communicable diseases also faced challenges in 2020. Following up on a 2019 meeting jointly held with GAfPA, the European Federation of Neurological Associations pinpointed stigma, treatment access and patient empowerment as priority issues for patients with neurological conditions such as migraine and dementia. GAfPA amplified these messages through its policy blog and social media outreach.

RESOURCES



REPORTS

- ▶ Navigating Cancer Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic



BLOG POSTS

- ▶ Advocates Elevate Chronic Disease Issues Amid COVID-19
- ▶ Advocates Unite on Access to Neurological Care
- ▶ Non-Communicable Disease Treatment Falters Under COVID-19



INNOVATION & VALUE

Innovation became a global imperative in 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Challenges

The urgent need for COVID-19 vaccines and treatments underscored the value of continued collaboration among governments, health care providers and the private sector to develop sound policies that spur the development of new medications for patients.

The Global Alliance for Patient Access hosted its 5th Annual Latin American Patient Advocacy Summit, virtually bringing together more than 100 patient advocates, clinicians and experts. Participants relayed how innovation and access issues impact their countries, especially during COVID-19.

Across the globe, telehealth has played an increasingly important role in maintaining patient care during the pandemic. Telehealth applications highlight how technology and policy can come together to improve patients' access to care even during challenging circumstances.

Health Technology Assessment

Amid a steady stream of new medications, diagnostics and medical devices, global policy conversations about the value of health technology became more important than ever. But as GAFPA highlighted in a new policy paper, many patient advocacy groups discern a growing gap between the input opportunities offered to them during health technology assessments and the impact their input actually has.

"Patient Engagement in Health Technology Assessment" examines the need for patient advocates and advocacy organizations to have a meaningful role in decisions that ultimately impact their access to new medications and medical devices.

RESOURCES



POLICY PAPERS

- ▶ Patient Engagement in Health Technology Assessment



FAST FACTS

- ▶ COVID-19 & Patient Access



REPORTS

- ▶ Latin American Patient Advocacy Summit



BLOG POSTS

- ▶ European Patient Groups Call for HTA Improvements
- ▶ Latin America Leads the Way on Telemedicine



RHEUMATIC & MUSCULOSKELETAL DISEASES

While COVID-19 dominated the attention of the health community, some patients living with rheumatic and musculoskeletal diseases found themselves facing unprecedented challenges.

Disruptions to Care for RMDs

Many hospitals and doctors' offices needed to prioritize the treatment of patients with COVID-19, while others closed down to reduce the risk of exposure. The changes disrupted care for chronic disease patients, some already struggling with compromised immune systems and at a higher risk for severe COVID-19.

The topic was front and center at GAFPA's annual meeting of rheumatic and musculoskeletal disease patient advocates. Held through GAFPA's European Alliance for Patient Access division, the virtual meeting took place in conjunction with the EULAR 2020 meeting. Maximizing the reach of a virtual format, EAfPA brought together 24 patient representatives from across Europe to discuss the impact and implications of COVID-19 on the RMD patient community.

Following the meeting, EAfPA produced "Surviving the Present, Planning for the Future: The Implications of the COVID-19 Crisis for European RMD Groups" to capture for a wider community the key messages and best practices highlighted during the meeting.

RESOURCES



REPORTS

- ▶ Surviving the Present, Planning for the Future



BLOG POSTS

- ▶ The Forgotten COVID-19 Vulnerability
- ▶ Arthritis & the European Workforce
- ▶ Addressing Rheumatic & Musculoskeletal Disease Amid COVID-19



MOVING FORWARD

Advocates are in a unique position right now.

With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting countries across the world, health care is at the forefront for many policymakers. This presents valuable opportunities for change and for ensuring that patients' needs and values are represented in health policies.

The year 2021 brings exciting new advocacy initiatives for GAfPA. With efforts continuing to expand in RMD, cardiovascular health, neurology and cancer, GAfPA will also expand its advocacy into rare disease issues.

GAfPA looks forward to continuing to advocate for policies that support patient-centered care in the new year.



About the Global Alliance for Patient Access

The Global Alliance for Patient Access is an international platform for health care providers and patient advocates to inform policy dialogue about patient-centered care.

[GAfPA.org](https://www.gafpa.org)

