Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for referring patients with rheumatological conditions to our clinic. We now have established a rapid access Early Arthritis Clinic to serve those with early stage of rheumatoid arthritis and spondyloarthritis.

There is ample evidence indicating that early initiation of disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARD) in patients with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) can significantly improve long-term functional outcome. Disease remission can be achieved in most RA patients and drug-free remission is achievable in some.

Prompt diagnosis of spondyloarthritis (ankylosing spondylitis, psoriatic arthritis etc) helps patients to start appropriate treatment early and avoid unnecessary suffering and functional decline.

The key for early intervention is rapid access to rheumatologists by patients and recognition of their RA at the early evolving phase. The Early Arthritis Clinic (EAC) at OHSU is now established to facilitate early diagnosis and treatment of RA and spondyloarthritis with the goal of rapid improvement in signs and symptoms as well as preventing joint damage and subsequent disability.

The EAC at OHSU provides a rapid access to rheumatologists and a comprehensive assessment of patients with all types of inflammatory arthritis. Patients referred to the EAC will be evaluated by a rheumatologist within two weeks of referral.

Guidelines for referral:
Any patient with new symptoms of inflammatory arthritis:

1. Clinical evidence of inflammatory arthritis*.
2. Disease duration 0 - 12 months from symptom onset.
3. At least 1 swollen joint or
4. New onset of symptoms of inflammatory back pain **

*Symptoms and signs of inflammatory arthritis: morning stiffness >1 hour, swelling and tender joints with or without elevation of systemic inflammation markers, ESR and CRP.

** Symptoms of inflammatory back pain: Insidious back pain starting before the age of 45 years, morning stiffness in the back > 1 hour, getting better with exercise/moving around and getting worse with rest in bed, back pain worse at night

Please make a referral through our rheumatology clinic with specific request to Early Arthritis Clinic by using the Early Arthritis Clinic New Patient Intake Form. Phone: 503 494 8637, FAX: 503 494 1133