

## **Team Rubicon and Patient Advocate Foundation Expand COVID-19 Emergency Food Assistance Program Thanks to Additional Donation from the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation**

*Expanded program will allow the veteran-led non-profit, along with Patient Advocate Foundation to provide additional emergency food delivery and financial assistance to immunocompromised Americans during COVID-19 pandemic*

**Los Angeles, CA (June 30, 2020)** –With nearly 11,000 patients served, including 1,000 emergency food deliveries made and over 10,000 financial assistance grants being provided in 49 states, Team Rubicon (TR) and Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF) are announcing the expansion of the COVID-19 Emergency Food Assistance Program. The program, a collaboration between TR and PAF, provides emergency food and financial assistance to people living with cancer, multiple sclerosis, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Initially launched on May 8, 2020 with a \$7 million charitable donation from the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, the program has enabled Team Rubicon to deliver needed food to 1,118 immunocompromised Americans through its network of Greyshirt volunteers and allowed PAF to provide 10,700 immunocompromised patients with emergency financial assistance enabling the purchase of groceries, food delivery and medically tailored meals. The program's expansion has been made possible by the ongoing support of the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation and its commitment of an additional \$5 million charitable donation.

The program has received numerous responses from patients who have been assisted through this service collaborative. For example, Kim, a patient who received financial assistance from the program, wrote "I am so very blessed and grateful to have been able to receive this much needed grant. I have been going through some very challenging times recently due to being laid off from my job due to COVID- 19, so here I am without an income. This grant couldn't have come at a better time to help in receiving food. I am so very appreciative beyond the words that I can express here. Only people who have come into difficult times, would/could truly understand what it's like. Thank you again, from the bottom of my heart ..."

The additional funding and program expansion provide Team Rubicon and Patient Advocate Foundation the opportunity to help even more immunocompromised Americans across the United States.

John Damonti, President of the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, said that the program has been even more successful than expected. "It's clear this program is helping to meet a tremendous need, and we are glad that our Foundation has been able to step up with additional support," he said. "Moreover, as one of our goals is for the program to be sustainable and provide longer lasting support through the pandemic, we are pleased that PAF is accepting donations to the fund."

The comprehensive program will continue to bring together the unique offerings of Team Rubicon, a nonprofit organization that mobilizes veterans for disaster relief, and Patient

Advocate Foundation (PAF), a national nonprofit organization that provides case management services and financial aid to patients with chronic, life-threatening and debilitating illnesses. Team Rubicon's national network of 120,000 volunteers—known as Greyshirts—provide the delivery of food and groceries, free of charge, while PAF provides financial assistance to patients in need.

“Food is a necessity, yet for people who are sick and vulnerable, food insecurity is often a part of daily life and an unwanted burden. COVID-19 has exacerbated the lack of access to food for people who are immunocompromised due to required social distancing and loss of jobs and income,” said Fran Castellow, MEd, President, operations of Patient Advocate Foundation. “In just a month, the program has confirmed our fears, evidencing an incredible need for emergency food support of immunocompromised patients. Team Rubicon and PAF have come together to solve both the logistical and financial needs of these vulnerable patients. We are proud to be able to continue this vital support and are hoping others will join us in supporting this effort.”

“The COVID-19 Emergency Food Assistance Program has allowed us to come together with two needed organizations that share a mission of serving vulnerable populations during a global health crisis,” said Corey Eide, Team Rubicon's Senior Director, Capabilities Development. “That we have already been able to adapt our traditional response efforts and leverage our unique technology to serve so many Americans during the pandemic has shown us what a huge impact dedicated individuals can have on their neighbors in a time of extreme need.”

To date, the COVID-19 Emergency Food Assistance Program has served more than 11,000 people. Members of the public can help the program serve even more patients in need by donating or volunteering. To donate, please visit: <https://impact.patientadvocate.org/COVID-Food>. To volunteer alongside Team Rubicon's Greyshirts, please sign up here: <https://teamrubiconusa.org/neighbors/>

### **Who is Eligible?**

Patients with cancer, multiple sclerosis or rheumatoid arthritis who have trouble accessing or affording food or other nutritional needs due to COVID-19, with eligibility established at the point of application in most cases.

### **How to Apply and How it Works**

Team Rubicon developed a new feature in its Enterprise Management System (EMS) platform to enable a streamlined, web-based application for patients or their advocates.

Through this process, eligible patients, their caregivers, or care team members can request complimentary delivery of food and other critical supplies directly to their place of residence by one of TR's Greyshirt volunteers. Patients with an identified financial need are able to apply for a one-time grant of \$500 to help pay for food and nutritional needs, including groceries, food delivery or pick up and medically tailored meals.

More information, including application instructions can be found at <https://teamrubiconusa.org/applynow>.

### **About Team Rubicon**

Team Rubicon is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that serves communities by mobilizing veterans to continue their service by leveraging their skills and experience to help people prepare, respond, and recover from disasters and humanitarian crises. Amidst the COVID-19 outbreak, Team Rubicon has developed extensive protocols that allow its volunteers, also known as Greyshirts, to swiftly and safely continue to deliver on its core mission of disaster response. Team Rubicon has also adapted its capabilities to respond to the pandemic by providing assistance such as food delivery to at-risk populations, coordination and logistics support for those in temporary quarantine, and opportunities for volunteers to help their neighbors through individual acts of service. Additionally, Team Rubicon has helped local, state, and federal partners with direct medical response including running mobile testing sites, decompressing hospitals, and providing on-site medical assistance. Visit [www.teamrubiconusa.org](http://www.teamrubiconusa.org) for more information.

### **About Patient Advocate Foundation (PAF)**

Established in 1996, Patient Advocate Foundation is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which provides case management services and financial aid to Americans with chronic, life-threatening, and debilitating diseases. For more information about Patient Advocate Foundation and its mission to improve health access to all patients, visit [www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org) or call 1-800-532-5274.

### **About the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation**

The Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation promotes health equity and seeks to improve the health outcomes of populations disproportionately affected by serious diseases by strengthening healthcare worker capacity, integrating medical care and community-based supportive services, and mobilizing communities in the fight against disease. The Foundation engages partners to develop, test, sustain and spread innovative clinic-community partnerships to help patients access care and support for cancer in the U.S., China, Africa, and Brazil and for cardiovascular diseases, multiple sclerosis, and rheumatoid arthritis in the United States. For more information about the Bristol Myers Squibb Foundation, visit us at [BMS.com/Foundation](http://BMS.com/Foundation).

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