

**Directions: Please use this template to submit a letter to both the Doctors and Dr. Phil. Simply put your cursor over all the verbiage, right click to “copy”. Then go back to the web page and click on the link to Email provided to each show. When you are redirected to the show page, in the comments box right click and select “paste”. Then you can scroll up to the rest of the form to fill out your personal information.**

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On an episode titled “Overweight or Underfed”, original air date September 23rd<sup>h</sup> 2011, Dr Phil made a statement suggesting childhood obesity could lead to Rheumatoid Arthritis. Immediately the International Autoimmune Arthritis Movement (IAAM), through their Media Awareness Hotline, began informing the Autoimmune Arthritis community of this public misinformation. Within days, they encouraged hundreds of patients to email and post on the Message Boards, asking for recognition of this error. As of October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011, no resolve has been made on the part of the Dr. Phil staff or producers.

After further investigation into this matter, IAAM discovered that in January 2011 Dr. Phil made a similar statement on the Doctors (*January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011, episode “The 17 Day Diet Challenge”*): *“Changing your lifestyle and becoming healthier can prolong your life and help your children.”Seventy percent of children who are obese become obese adults,” Dr. Phil says. “And we’re seeing adult diseases show up in children; adult diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, essential hypertension. These things are showing up in children — and we didn’t see [this] a few generations ago — because of this obesity.”*

This type of misinformation simply cannot continue. Autoimmune Arthritis patients have spent decades trying to dispel the confusion that the word “arthritis” is an umbrella term that covers all arthritis conditions. This is not true. “Arthritis”, in its singular verbiage, is typically interchangeable with OSTEOARTHRITIS, or a common degenerative condition caused by wear or tear, injury or age. Because it affects only the weight-bearing joints it is highly likely weight can be a factor in its onset. Autoimmune Arthritis, like Rheumatoid, is caused by a malfunctioning immune system and affects the whole body- including joints, tissues, and sometimes organs, as well as produces obnoxious fatigue, fevers and nausea. It is caused by genetics and/or environmental factors.

We ask that the producers of Dr. Phil and the Doctors, who we understand are one in the same, please, at minimum, publically retract these statements, clarifying OSTEOarthritis can be caused by weight, not RHEUMATOID arthritis. However, it would be preferred to host an episode- one on Dr. Phil and one on the Doctors- showing the psychological and physical impacts of having a disease like Rheumatoid Arthritis that is treated with chemotherapy, but thought to be the same as a condition that could be a result of excessive weight gain and could be treated with a simple change in diet.

The International Autoimmune Arthritis Movement, a global nonprofit headquartered in Los Angeles, CA, is founded and run by patients who have Rheumatoid Arthritis. They are ready to visit the studio to educate Dr. Phil and the other producers about this debilitating and serious disease. They can be reached at [info@IAAMovement.org](mailto:info@IAAMovement.org).