

IAPO

We are at Fundación Psoriasis de Panamá with its director, Mrs Ana Teresa Meneses (ATM).

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to visit you, we are very happy to be here.

IAPO

Can you tell us a little bit about the history of the foundation?

ATM

In 2004, the Chapman spouses created a foundation for patients with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. This year marks 11 years of supporting patients to receive specialized medical care, and providing necessary information to face the disease and its consequences.

Each year we organize activities within the framework of World Psoriasis Day, which is on 29 October.

On 25 August we began our campaign, with a journalism competition entitled "Psoriasis Foundation Panama". We organize this to encourage the media to diffuse information about the disease and its characteristics. It is a serious, chronic, non-communicable disease, which physically and psychologically impacts the lives of patients and their families.

In September we will hold our annual awareness march. We start at 4 pm, and always have an average of 150 people joining.

Patients from across the country attend, and come to learn more about their disease and how to deal with it.

We have the support of all media, as well as financial support of private companies. Without this it would be impossible to carry out all our activities.

IAPO

How many people or families does the foundation support regularly?

ATM

The foundation supports 1900 people who have the disease, or suspect that they may have it, and do not feel that their condition has improved, despite treatment. We send each of the 1900 to a doctor for a second opinion. Later, some of them become volunteers, patients, and relatives of patients.

IAPO

Do they all come from Panama City, or from the whole of Panama?

ATM

We have patients from all over the country, including indigenous districts.

IAPO

How do you link with communities, towns, and villages to spread knowledge about Fundacion Psoriasis Panama?

ATM

Through our current campaign, and through the media. It is the only way we can reach patients across the Republic: radio, newspaper, television, online newsletter.

IAPO

You advise families, and accompany them to do everything necessary to get an accurate diagnosis. What are the challenges in Panama, for patients suffering with psoriasis, to gain fast access to effective healthcare and treatment?

ATM

We are led by an important foundation, the Federation of Panama Patients. With stakeholders such as national health authorities, social security bodies and the Ministry of Health, it is reviewing guidelines for health and medicine, the new rules for drug regulation, and prescription. With this action, we have the opportunity to obtain the necessary medicines for patients to control their disease. It is a challenge, even more for psoriasis as it is still unknown. It obliges us to disseminate more information and to tech more.

IAPO

Many thanks. We wish you the best for fighting every day to support patients.

ATM

And thanks to you we are not alone. Our patients – 60,000 Panamanians and residents of Panama – are not alone. We can count on this association with IAPO, and with your guidance and teaching we can better support these people.