

The American Thoracic Society (ATS) has long held the inclusion of the patient perspective as a core component of its mission. To this end, the ATS Public Advisory Roundtable (PAR)—which represents the patient voice of the Society—has for the past ten-plus years played an invaluable role in helping the organization shape its policies to keep families and patients as a central focus of all ATS programs and activities.

Nowhere has this been more evident than at the annual ATS International Conference where PAR has facilitated patient programs such as the **Breathing Better with the ATS** patient and family forum, the **Meet-the-Expert** public forum, the **PAR Symposium** and the many patient speakers integrated throughout the scientific session curriculum.

This Patient Voices booklet highlights the stories of some of the patients who have spoken at past ATS International Conferences on their experiences with pulmonary disorders such as COPD, sleep apnea, lung cancer, pulmonary hypertension, asthma, and ARDS, among others. These brave patients, many of whom have had lifelong struggles with their diseases, put faces and voices to these oftentimes life-threatening conditions. Their stories serve as an inspiration to many others who have pulmonary diseases. They illustrate that a full life can go on after diagnosis, and that patient voices will be heard.

A major thrust of Dr. Hill's presidency was to explore ways of enhancing what the ATS does for patients and their families. That's why the ATS has redoubled its efforts to forge new alliances with patients and patient advocacy organizations at the national and grassroots levels on the issues of disease awareness, public education, and advocacy. That's also why the ATS has opened up its membership criteria—now

anyone, including a patient, is able to join and participate in the activities of the Society. The ATS continues its commitment to funding cutting edge research through the many grants awarded to deserving investigators by the ATS Foundation Research Program in partnership with PAR. This booklet is another manifestation of these efforts to strengthen the relationship between patients, their families, and the ATS.

We salute the ATS Public Advisory Roundtable as well as the patients who have given talks at the ATS International Conference that have inspired us and made this booklet possible. We hope that this booklet will be valuable to clinicians who are seeking the patient perspective and to other patients and their families. The ATS will continue its firm commitment to working with patients and its PAR members on advocacy, research, and educational issues. We look forward to continued inclusion of the patient perspective in the work of the Society as we progress toward cures for many lung and airway diseases.



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