

Foreword

Lessons learned from patients leave long-lasting impressions, often beyond what is learned in the classroom. The patient perspective is paramount to our work at the American Thoracic Society, and since 2001, the ATS Public Advisory Roundtable (PAR), along with PAR partners, comprised of various patient advocacy groups, has opened up the Society to those most personally affected by the diseases we research and treat: patients and their caregivers.

This focus is perhaps most evident at the annual ATS International Conference where PAR facilitates patient programs, such as the Meet-the-Expert patient and family forum, PAR Symposium, and several dozen scientific sessions that feature patient speakers. We're very proud of this unique aspect of our conference, and the outcomes of these experiences stretch from inspiring investigators and stimulating new research, into shaping ATS advocacy programs.

Patient Voices is a particularly important part of this effort. In this edition, you'll hear from patients in their own words, not just about the disease and its treatment, but about their reactions to diagnoses, their fears, their recoveries, and what they think it's important for medical professionals to know. These patients have spoken at ATS conferences and to patient advocacy organizations, serving as a reminder to the many others suffering from similar diseases that the fight continues.

Together with patients and their families we will seek cures, and the opportunities for discovery have never been greater. We have the tools to unlock the mysteries of lung disease and advance pulmonary health through innovative research, clinical care, advocacy, education, and training. And thanks to our PAR partners, our members have access to the many resources, from disease-specific grants and publications to patient registries developed by those groups.

Thank you to all the contributors for your stories, and for making Patient Voices possible, as we work together toward ever more treatments, therapies, and ultimately, cures. ■



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(2019-2020)



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