

Foreword



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Since 2001, the ATS Public Advisory Roundtable (PAR) has helped to highlight the patient experience and to weave patients into the fabric of the American Thoracic Society. Along with PAR partners, comprised of various patient advocacy groups, PAR has opened up the Society to include those most personally affected by the diseases we research and treat: the patients and their families.

Throughout the year, PAR and PAR partners promote awareness, public education, advocacy, and research. The outcomes of those presentations are expansive and stretch from inspiring investigators to shaping ATS advocacy programs.

Patient Voices is a particularly important part of this effort. This special edition highlights a critical issue when seeking care, misdiagnosis and

underdiagnosis, by focusing on people who had a long and difficult road to finding an answer. Their stories highlight an imperative in comprehensive medical care: we must listen carefully to the thoughts and concerns of each and every patient. To quote one of this year's patients, "the rarest diseases require the rarest doctors – the ones who take the time to really listen."

The stories illustrate how important collaboration is to quality care, and we're grateful to the contributors for sharing their experiences. We also share in their hope that this edition will raise awareness about lung disease and its far-reaching effects for those impacted.

Thank you for making Patient Voices possible as we work together toward ever more treatments, therapies, and ultimately, cures.