

Chair's Message

In 2001, vision turned into reality as the American Thoracic Society (ATS) leadership formally partnered with patients and their families. This partnership is known as the ATS Public Advisory Roundtable (PAR). As the patient arm of the Society, PAR is a central component of the ATS, and continues to be one of the only patient-centered groups woven into the fabric of a medical membership association.

For the past several years, the ATS PAR has identified and assigned patient speakers to scientific sessions during the ATS International Conference. During this global gathering in May of 2018, some of the best minds in pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine came together in San Diego, California. Fifteen well-informed and engaging patients stood at the podium and courageously shared their disease-related experiences with the audience of professionals. Their goal was to share their journey — to put a “face” to their diagnosis. As a result, respiratory professionals including physicians, clinicians, scientists, and researchers received an intimate look into disease impact on patients’ lives. Understanding the patient perspective is essential for conference attendees to advance scientific research toward better patient outcomes.

This booklet, *ATS Patient Voices 7*, was created to expand the reach of those stories beyond the conference. Today, we continue to align our work with the unique and urgent needs of individuals living with sleep disorders, critical illness, and respiratory diseases. Together, we’re creating a more unified and powerful research and advocacy community. As our patients gain more knowledge and insight about their diseases and how it affects their quality of life, they remain invaluable resources to us all.

It is a great honor and privilege for the ATS PAR to be the “patient voice” of the ATS. ■



Kerri Connolly
Chair, ATS-PAR