

Foreword



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Respiratory illnesses affect millions of lives worldwide, imposing physical burdens that are well-documented and widely studied. What may often be overlooked is the equally significant mental and emotional toll these conditions exact on patients and their loved ones. This year's 12th edition of Patient Voices delves into the emotional journey faced by those living with respiratory disease, giving readers insight into their unique perspectives as patients.

Since 2001, the ATS Public Advisory Roundtable (PAR) has helped to highlight the patient experience and to weave them into the fabric of the American Thoracic Society. Along with PAR partners, comprised of various patient advocacy groups, PAR highlights the experiences of those most personally affected by the disease: the patients.

Each account in this year's Patient Voices is a testament to patients' courage and strength in their battle against lung diseases. Their narratives reveal the challenges of misdiagnosis, stigma, and the indomitable spirit it takes to endure and persevere with respiratory illness. Their voices remind us that the medical community must listen carefully and compassionately to the thoughts and feelings of each patient, as doing so can make a difference in their diagnosis, treatment, and healing journey.

This work's insights also emphasize the need for collaboration among medical professionals, patients, and advocacy groups to ensure comprehensive and effective patient care. By joining forces, we can foster a greater understanding of the psychological dimensions of lung disease and, in turn, develop more holistic approaches to treatment.

As we read each patient's story, we thank them for bravely sharing their experience. Their candor empowers us to raise awareness about the far-reaching effects of lung disease, reinforcing the importance of empathy and compassion in healthcare practices.

May this edition inspire us to redouble our efforts to enhance the lives of those affected by respiratory illnesses and to prioritize the mental and emotional well-being of patients and their families. ●