

Because patients are central to what pulmonologists and other medical professionals do, the American Thoracic Society established the Public Advisory Roundtable (ATS PAR) in 2001 to enable patients and their advocates to interact directly with the ATS and help clinicians and researchers understand their perspectives.

ATS PAR is known for its unique ability to respond to patient needs, mobilize efforts to improve patient care, increase research efforts in lung disease, build advocacy and awareness of lung disease, and promote lung health on a national level. ATS PAR members are patients, family members, and advocates who understand the real needs of patients and the lung diseases from which they suffered. Following in the footsteps of the founders, they articulate those needs and help bridge the gap between patients and physicians.

Never before has a medical association elevated patient voices to a level of such an important function within its organization. ATS leadership has shown that ATS PAR remains a vital part of the organization and is held in high esteem. The ATS PAR chair is a standing member of the ATS Board of Directors, with a direct line of communication to ATS leadership.

The implementation of ATS PAR through the vision of Dr. Bill Martin, an ATS past president, not only created opportunities to strengthen medical care but also opened doors for collaboration and partnership. This in turn has helped to increase understanding of lung diseases and fund research that draws us closer to cures. To date, ATS PAR-affiliated member organizations have supported the ATS Foundation with more than \$5 million in funding for innovative and cutting edge medical research in lung disease.

For the past several years, ATS PAR has had the privilege of assigning patient speakers to medical sessions at the ATS International Conference, which draws approximately 12,000 pulmonary, critical care, and sleep medicine researchers and clinicians annually. These patients share their journeys through life with lung diseases that attendees are currently treating and researching.

Within these pages you will find many compelling patient stories that provided the “patient voice” during the International Conference and have inspired attendees to continue research and clinical care without losing sight of the patients.

It continues to be an honor and privilege for ATS PAR to be “the patient voice of the ATS.”



**Gregory R. Porta**  
Chair, ATS PAR