

“Medicine is learned by the bedside and not in the classroom.” –Sir William Osler

Lessons learned from patients can leave impressions as lasting as those of mentors and teachers. The patient perspective is paramount to our work at the American Thoracic Society. Since 2001, the ATS Public Advisory Roundtable (PAR), representing the patient voice of the Society, has helped to bring patients and families to the forefront of all programming and activities.

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, creating a unique communication experience for all the attendees.

Now in its fifth edition, Patient Voices highlights the stories of patients who have presented at past ATS International Conferences. You will hear stories of pulmonary disorders such as COPD, lung cancer, pulmonary hypertension, hypersensitivity pneumonitis, alpha-1 antitrypsin disease, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, and others.

Many patients have struggled all their lives with disease, and oftentimes they experience life-threatening conditions. Their stories confront great pain, fear, and grief. Through the vulnerability of these narratives we are able to shed light on pulmonary diseases and help inspire the many millions of people grappling with lung disease all over the world.

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.

Today’s and tomorrow’s leaders will translate respiratory discoveries and will do so in collaboration with patients. Now everyone, including a patient, is able to participate in the activities of the Society and join the ATS as a member.

Our commitment to research, in particular to deserving early career investigators, continues to grow through the ATS Foundation Research Program, in partnership with PAR.

We look forward to continued inclusion of the patient and family perspective in our work and hope that this booklet is valuable to clinicians seeking their viewpoints. More importantly, we hope that the booklet empowers patients and their stories to be told.

We sincerely appreciate the efforts of the ATS Public Advisory Roundtable, as well as the voices whose courage and wisdom have made this fifth edition possible.



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David Gozal MD, MBA
ATS President
2016-2017



A handwritten signature of Stephen C. Crane in black ink.

Stephen C. Crane, PhD, MPH
ATS Executive Director