



Congress Interviews

AMJ speaks with two influential leaders about their work with the American Thoracic Society (ATS), reflecting on the current landscape of pulmonary medicine and the global community behind it. We had the honor of speaking with Raed Dweik, incoming President of ATS, who shared his clinical insights and vision for the year ahead. Jesse Roman, esteemed ATS member since 1988 and incoming President for 2027–2028, reflects on decades of research, leadership, and innovation in respiratory care.

Featuring: Raed Dweik and Jesse Roman



Raed Dweik

President, American Thoracic Society (ATS), Professor and Inaugural Chief, Integrated Hospital Care Institute (IHI), Cleveland Clinic, Ohio, USA

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Q1 Your work in pulmonary vascular diseases has been groundbreaking. What initially drew you to this area of medicine?

As a physician-scientist, studying the pulmonary circulation has given me the opportunity to align my clinical practice in pulmonary hypertension clinic with my research interest in nitric oxide biology. This has also allowed me to build a world-class destination program in pulmonary vascular disease; a program that provides exceptional care for patients while performing cutting-edge basic, translational, and clinical research. Our Pulmonary Hypertension Educational Summit draws attendees from across the country, including clinicians, researchers, patients, and families.

Q2 What are some of the most promising advances in pulmonary medicine this year that you're most excited by?

We are on the cusp of many advances in so many areas, from big data and artificial intelligence, to genomics, genetics, and epigenetics, to advances in diagnostics, therapeutics, and precision medicine. Some examples include advances in lung cancer screening and diagnostics, biologics for asthma and COPD, immunotherapy for lung cancer, antifibrotic medications for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, disease-modifying drugs for pulmonary hypertension, and bronchoscopy interventions for airway diseases, among others.

Q3 Are there any major clinical challenges in the field you are particularly focused on right now?

The public's eroding trust in science and scientists is a major challenge. Regulatory challenges and uncertainty regarding funding for research and clinical care are also major challenges. The burden of chronic lung diseases remains very high, as does the impact of occupational and environmental exposures.

Q4 As the incoming ATS President, what are your top priorities for the organization over the next year?

Our long-term strategic plan for ATS includes transforming patient care, leading scientific discoveries, impacting global health, and advancing professional development, all while we strengthen our ATS community. My focus will be on maintaining the premier status of the society and ensuring that ATS is a large

tent for all including clinicians, researchers, educators, and innovators; a place for both U.S and international members; a space for trainees, junior faculty, seasoned professionals, patients, and families.

Q5 This year's ATS conference brought together thousands of experts from around the world. What were your standout moments from the Conference – a talk, presentation, or discovery?

One of the most valuable aspects of the ATS International Conference is the opportunity to connect with colleagues and leaders from across the U.S and around the world. The keynote lectures are always highlights: thought-provoking, insightful, and inspiring. The year-in-review sessions are a great way to catch up on the latest literature in our fields.

The assembly business meetings also stand out as both informative and enjoyable, offering a great

mix of updates, networking, and community building.

My favorite part, however, is walking through the poster halls, seeing the latest research up close and engaging with the incredible early career professionals who are driving innovation in our field.

It's also deeply gratifying to walk through the convention center and witness the vibrant networking and collaboration happening among peers from every corner of the globe. The exhibition hall is another highlight, showcasing the latest advancements in respiratory care. Attendees get access to cutting-edge technologies, tools, and solutions that are shaping the future of our field.

Q6 How do you envision ATS continuing to foster global collaboration across the respiratory community?

ATS continues to foster global collaboration by actively partnering with respiratory societies around



the world. Our members and leaders regularly engage in each other's conferences, creating valuable opportunities for shared learning and collaboration.

“ATS thrives on empowering others and fostering inclusive leadership”

ATS thrives on empowering others and fostering inclusive leadership. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to strengthening global partnerships across the respiratory community, and we will continue to build on this foundation moving forward.

A cornerstone of our global efforts is the long-standing Methods in Epidemiologic, Clinical, and Operations Research (MECOR) program, which has evolved into a globally connected research

and education community. With increasingly structured and regionally tailored courses, the MECOR program now operates in Africa, Southeast Asia, China, India, Latin America, and Türkiye, empowering both students and faculty to drive advances in respiratory health.

Q7 What would you say to your peers who are considering attending ATS International Conference 2026?

The ATS International Conference is returning to Orlando, Florida in 2026 for the first time in many years, and it's the perfect opportunity to be part of something special. It is a great place for clinicians, researchers, educators, and innovators to connect and collaborate. I encourage everyone to begin planning now by submitting an abstract. ATS recognizes outstanding work through assembly awards and the

international trainee scholarship program, which supports the best abstracts submitted by international participants.

Beyond the scientific program, the conference offers rich opportunities for global engagement and networking. The International Participants Center and the ATS Global Community provide welcoming spaces to connect with colleagues from around the world, share experiences, and build lasting collaborations.

Whether you're presenting research, seeking inspiration, or growing your professional network, ATS 2026 in Orlando is the place to be. Don't miss it!

