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American College of Gastroenterology (ACG), Allergan and Ironwood Pharmaceuticals Announce Winner of "Picture My IBS" Competition

*THE PICTURE MY IBS CAMPAIGN SHOWCASES ORIGINAL PATIENT ARTWORK TO
EXPRESS THE IMPACT OF IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME*

BETHESDA, MD, April 27, 2017 – The American College of Gastroenterology (ACG), in collaboration with Allergan and Ironwood Pharmaceuticals, Inc., is excited to announce that Kimberly P. of Pennsylvania is the winner of the *Picture My IBS* competition, an initiative aimed at encouraging individuals to express their experience with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and to share their journey – and the symptoms that affect them – through art and narrative.

According to a recent physician survey, when asked what was lacking most in IBS treatment, one of the most common answers was communication between patients and their doctors. As a result, the *Picture My IBS* competition was developed to engage, connect, inspire and motivate the IBS community to share their personal experiences with the goal of improving patient-physician communication and, ultimately, patient care. Entrants were asked to submit their own original artwork and corresponding story to showcase the unseen struggles many IBS patients face.

"There were many powerful images submitted by the entrants, and aside from artistic merit, the ACG also recognized the winning artwork for its creativity and motivation impact in expressing a personal journey with IBS," said Dr. Brian E. Lacy, Co-Editor-in-Chief of *The American Journal of Gastroenterology* and one of the judges for the *Picture My IBS* competition. Dr. Eamonn M.M. Quigley also served as a physician judge. Through this contest, the College sought to highlight how personal stories and insights shared through artistic expression may help bridge the communication gap between patient and physician, which is particularly important in a condition like IBS, where symptoms such as abdominal pain and constipation or diarrhea can be embarrassing for patients to discuss, even with a physician.

The campaign kicked off in October 2016, at ACG's Annual Scientific Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada. The winning entry will be featured via the [ACG Blog](#) and www.PictureMyIBS.org during April – in honor of IBS Awareness Month – helping to bring to life the journey, struggle and hope experienced by many patients with IBS.

The winning artwork, titled "Darkest of Days," chronicles Kimberly P.'s experience living with IBS: "How alone we feel when suffering from IBS. I feel so alone at times, afraid to go out and enjoy myself because a flare-up may happen. When I do make plans, I often cancel, making me feel like a bad friend. The gray bleak skyscape is my life and the red represents the pain I experience."

For additional information about the *Picture My IBS* campaign and living with IBS, please visit, PictureMyIBS.org.

About IBS

IBS is a chronic gastrointestinal condition marked by recurrent abdominal pain that occurs in association with defecation or a change in bowel habits (constipation or diarrhea), as well as other symptoms that do not seem to relate to the gut.¹ The condition affects an estimated 35 million Americans and is associated with emotional distress, impact on quality of life, disability, and high health care costs.²⁻⁶ A recent study indicated that nearly half of IBS patients experience symptoms for more than 10 years before receiving a diagnosis.⁷

IBS consists of a constellation of gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms, such as abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea, gassiness, bloating or cramping. Some people experience IBS with constipation (IBS-C), which is characterized by abdominal pain and difficult or infrequent bowel movements, while others may experience IBS with diarrhea (IBS-D), characterized by frequent loose stools, often with an urgent need to move the bowels. Others may also alternate between constipation and diarrhea. Since there are multiple factors that may contribute to the pathophysiology of IBS, treatment strategies are based on the nature and severity of symptoms and may include diet or lifestyle modifications, over-the-counter products or prescription medicines.

About Picture My IBS

It is estimated that only one-third of people with IBS seek treatment. IBS symptoms can be embarrassing, making it difficult for patients to discuss with others — even their own doctor. To help patients convey to physicians and loved ones how IBS is impacting their life, the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG), in collaboration with Allergan and Ironwood Pharmaceuticals, Inc., has created *Picture My IBS*, an initiative where patients can share their feelings and IBS journey through art. The initiative was envisioned as one way to break down the barriers surrounding a potentially uncomfortable conversation in an effort to help those affected by IBS find new ways to communicate their symptoms with doctors and others, with the ultimate goal of improving patient care. For additional information about the *Picture My IBS* campaign and living with IBS, please visit, PictureMyIBS.org.

About the American College of Gastroenterology

Founded in 1932, the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) is an organization with an international membership of more than 14,000 individuals from 86 countries. The College's vision is to be the pre-eminent professional organization that champions the evolving needs of clinicians in the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based and compassionate health care to gastroenterology patients. The mission of the College is to advance world-class care for patients with gastrointestinal disorders through excellence, innovation and advocacy in the areas of scientific investigation, education, prevention and treatment. www.gi.org. Follow the College on Twitter [@AmCollegeGastro](https://twitter.com/AmCollegeGastro).

References

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