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## Foreword

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## Foreword

The *Annals of Health Law & Life Sciences* Editorial Board is proud to present the Winter 2021 Issue, the first edition of our thirtieth volume to date. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the year 2020 was unprecedented in many respects, and doubly so in the health and life sciences spaces. The pandemic forced individuals to isolate and schools and businesses to operate virtually, yet scholarship persevered. As the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic dawned upon the world, scientific data and evidence became more important than ever for institutions and individuals alike. As such, I am honored to introduce the following works of scholarship which take a critical look at current policies in health law and life sciences, and show a better way forward.

Combining economics with health policy, Alexander C. Davis's *The International Price Index's Impact on Revenue in the Pharmaceutical Industry* begins by analyzing the current economic and regulatory policies in the pharmaceutical sphere. Davis introduces the International Price Index, first proposed by former Health & Human Services Secretary Alex Azar in 2018 to reduce drug prices under Medicare Part B. Davis outlines how the International Price Index would set a ceiling on Medicare reimbursement for certain drugs, putting pressure on other countries to be more flexible in their price regulations of pharmaceuticals in order to reduce drug costs in the United States. He acknowledges concerns that reducing reimbursement for pharmaceuticals may stifle innovation, but argues that marketing and other business expenses make up a greater share of pharmaceutical companies' budgets than research and development, and thus a reduction in reimbursement would not categorically stifle innovation. Davis concludes that the International Price Index will address the astronomical price of pharmaceuticals under Medicare Part B without stifling innovation, and echoes Secretary Azar's advocacy through his unique economic analysis.

In our second selection, Matthew R. Davison explores mental health trials in Illinois and how virtual trials due to the COVID-19 pandemic risk the violation of individuals' fundamental rights in *No Ordinary Process: The Flaws in Illinois Courts' Use of Remote Video*

*Technology in Mental Health Trials*. Davison, an attorney for the State of Illinois Guardianship & Advocacy Commission, examines the experimental use of video technology in trials before cities and municipalities were forced to shelter in place in 2020, and how subsequent stay-at-home orders accelerated its implementation. He focuses on important safeguards in mental health proceedings which can be neglected in the push to go remote. Davison explores the fundamental rights of these patients, their expectations of these trials, and where Illinois policies have fallen short and contradicted one another. Davison's piece is a crucial example of advocacy for those whose voices often go unheard.

Walter G. Johnson's *Catching Up with Convergence: Strategies for Bringing Together the Fragmented Regulatory Governance of Brain-Machine Interfaces In the United States* next explores the world of neurological technology, examines the evolution of brain-machine interface devices, and suggests possible consequences of allowing this technology to be developed without oversight. Johnson details the fragmented regulation of this emerging technology, which can variously come from the Food & Drug Administration, the Federal Trade Commission, and even federal courts. After evaluating this fast-growing industry and its patchwork regulation, Johnson proposes a solution which would allow this technology to flourish, while also providing consumers with the protections of a unified regulatory scheme.

Finally, Dr. Julien Chaisse and Dr. Nilanjan Banik address health governance in *Global Health Law & Governance Amidst the Pandemic*. This timely work identifies the vulnerabilities the COVID-19 pandemic exposed in various health systems, and introduces the Health Infrastructure Index, a tool which uses metrics to better index countries' health infrastructure. By applying indexing innovations to their critical analysis of these complicated systems, Dr. Julien Chaisse and Dr. Nilanjan Banik provide a solution to allow governments and international agencies to better allocate funds and improve global health overall, even amidst a pandemic.

On behalf of all staff members of *Annals of Health Law and Life Sciences*, I would like to thank Alexander C. Davis, Matthew R. Davison, Walter G. Johnson, Dr. Julien Chaisse, and Dr. Nilanjan

Banik for bringing their extraordinary work in the field of health law and life sciences to the pages of *Annals*. This issue shows that even in the face of unprecedented global challenges, innovation, scholarship, and advocacy persist. The Editorial Board and I would like to thank each student editor at *Annals* for their dedication, scholarship, and tenacity. Additionally, I would like to recognize the outstanding work of Daniel Duffy, *Annals* Publications Editor, for his commitment to exceptional scholarly work. Further, I would be remiss not to recognize the remarkable effort of our Advance Directive and Technical Editor, Peggy Frazier, who went above and beyond in ensuring this issue was published. I would also like to thank Marketing & Coordinating Editor, Natasha Shukla, for spearheading the curation of these articles; Symposium Editor, Krystal Tysdal, and Advance Directive Editors, Lauren Koch, and Harte Brick. Your tireless efforts have brought this issue to life. Furthermore, I would like to recognize and thank our remarkable Senior Editors: Mallory Burney, Raminta Kizyte, Damyan Kolomayets, Nicole Harris, Julian Florio, and Sunaina Ramesh. And finally, I would like to thank our supportive advisors at the Beazley Institute for Health Law and Policy, including Professors Nadia Sawicki and Kristin Finn, for their valued guidance.

Karin M. Long, Editor-in-Chief