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Foreword

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Foreword

The *Annals of Health Law and Life Sciences* Editorial Board is proud to present the Winter 2024 Issue, the first edition in our thirty-third volume to date. Each year, our Editorial Board seeks out articles that continue the *Annals* tradition of critically examining meaningful, pertinent, and predominant topics in health law and life sciences. I am honored to introduce the following works of health and life sciences law and policy scholarship.

Dr. Steve Waxman and Professor James Dechene's article, *Expanding the Scope of Practice for Nurse Practitioners and Physician Assistants to Enhance Healthcare*, addresses the challenges of lack of access to healthcare services, high costs, and variable quality of care that plague the American healthcare system. Dr. Waxman and Professor Dechene advocate for allowing advanced practice providers such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants to practice to the full extent of their education and training. This expansion would enhance the delivery of healthcare services, combat the access, cost, and quality challenges, and improve the American healthcare system overall. Dr. Waxman and Professor Dechene recommend that scope of practice standards and professional regulations allow advanced practice providers to work independently when appropriate. They also address the tort law implications and advise that tort laws should hold advanced practice providers and physicians to the same standards of care when performing the same medical services.

Katherine "Yenny" Wu's article, *Telehealth Solutions for Black Maternal Health*, examines the opportunity for telehealth to combat the disparity in maternal health outcomes for Black birthing people. Ms. Wu explains that Black birthing people are almost three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes compared to other birthing people. Ms. Wu articulates that implicit bias and reduced access to maternal healthcare services perpetuate this racial disparity. The COVID-19 pandemic shifted medical care toward virtual settings and increased access to telehealth services. Ms. Wu argues that permanently increasing access to telehealth services may improve Black maternal health outcomes. She proposes several solutions, including a more comprehensive regulatory framework at the federal level; financially incentivizing states to cooperate with federal government regulations aimed at streamlining the delivery of care; encouraging states to adopt pay parity provisions for audio healthcare services; and reducing implicit bias through state and federal grants to improve diversity, education, and training in the prenatal workforce.

On behalf of all staff members of the *Annals of Health Law and Life Sciences*, I would like to thank Dr. Steve Waxman, Professor James Dechene, and Katherine "Yenny" Wu for honoring *Annals* with their contributions. The Winter 2024 Issue demonstrates their scholarship, diligence, and excellence. The success of the Winter 2024 Issue would not have been possible without the hard work and perseverance of everyone involved. The Editorial Board and I want to thank every Associate Editor for their dedication, professionalism, and enthusiasm throughout the editing process. It is a great pleasure to work with such an earnest Editorial Board. I want to express my gratitude to my Editorial Board colleagues: Grace Connelly, Jenna Miller, Natasha Ganesh,

Bennett Murphy, Ariana Devereaux, Farisa Khan, Divya Das, and Manuel (Manny) Franco. I also want to thank our outstanding Senior Editors for their commitment to excellence. Paul Achkar, Juhi Desai, Olivia Goldner, Katie Koss, Amal Mir, and Jay-Donavin Ved, it is a privilege working with you. Finally, the entire *Annals* Editorial Staff would like to thank our advisors at the Beazley Institute for Health Law and Policy, including Professors Nadia Sawicki and Kristin Finn, for their continued guidance, support, and encouragement.

We are honored to present the Winter 2024 Issue of *Annals of Health Law and Life Sciences*.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Van Sistine

Editor-in-Chief

Annals of Health Law and Life Sciences