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# FOREWORD

## The American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics and Anti-Racism

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**Abstract:** This foreword explores the history of the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics and its role in promoting access to care and antiracism.

The parent organization of the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, The American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics (ASLME), has long been concerned with health and social justice. From our founding in 1911 as the Massachusetts Society of Examining Physicians to our re-branding in the late 1960s as the Massachusetts Society of Law & Medicine (which was subsequently and almost immediately changed to the American Society of Law & Medicine), our founders have written about and explored issues around access-to-care.

In 1992, the Society's educational mission was formally detailed and disseminated for the first time, with a focus on racial and economic Health Disparities as one of four key areas of study, in addition to Public Health, Patient Safety, and Biomedical Science and Research. That mission plainly states that

Racial, ethnic, and economic disparities in health status and access to health care represent areas of enormous concern that justify an ongoing intensive organizational focus for ASLME. Through research, meetings, and publications, ASLME aims to encourage a continuing examination of the factors that underlie disparities, the extent to which the organization and structure of the health care system itself contributes to disparities, and the proper role of law, public policy, and government in reducing health disparities.<sup>1</sup>

More recently, ASLME's Board of Directors embarked on several new anti-racism initiatives. First, beginning in 2021, ASLME committed to organizing a health law and anti-racism track at our flagship annual Health Law Professors conference, with plans to continue this track each year. Our 2021 conference, hosted online by our friends at Northeastern University School of Law, due to COVID-19, featured a successful rollout of the anti-racism track. We hope to see this track go live, along with the rest of our conference, in 2022 and beyond.

Second, ASLME launched a new graduate student writing competition focused on issues at the intersection of health law and anti-racism to support emerging scholars in any field interested in engaging in this work. The winner of the inaugural edition of this writing competition was Duquesne University School of Law student Gabrielle M. Kolencik. Her terrific article appears in this issue.<sup>2</sup>

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In the third tier of our initiatives, ASLME also plans to enhance scholarly discourse by creating both an Expanding Perspectives Column in *JLME* and an Expanding Perspectives Fellowship, designed to expand awareness of how specific issues related to law, medicine, and ethics impact individuals with a diverse set of backgrounds and experiences. The Expanding Perspectives Column and Fellowship are planned to launch in 2022.

Finally, in addition to these initiatives, ASLME and our partners at the University of Pennsylvania Law School, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine — Department of Medical Ethics and Health Policy, and the University of California Irvine School of Law all supported this special issue of the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, as well as a public conference at Penn, to continue the conversation. We thank all of the contributors to this special issue, all of the attendees and speakers at the conference, and especially our great friends Michele Goodwin and Holly Fernandez Lynch for guest-editing this issue,

for co-hosting the conference, and for inspiring us all with the work we do.

Everyone at the *Journal* is grateful and proud to publish such an import issue on the occasion of our fiftieth anniversary. We thank all of you, our members and readers, for loyally standing by us all these many years. We hope you enjoy this very special collection of papers.

#### Note

The author does not have any conflicts of interest to disclose.

#### References

1. A summary of ASLME's history and mission can be found at <<https://aslme.org/about-us/>> (last visited December 21, 2021).
2. G.M. Kolencik, "Harmony Between Man and His Environment: Reviewing the Trump Administration's Changes to the National Environmental Policy Act in the Context of Environmental Racism," *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* 50, no. 1 (2022): 76-84.