



# A DECADE OF IMPACT AND INFLUENCE



CENTER FOR  
BIOETHICS  
HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL



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## Dear friends and supporters,

As I reflect on the first ten years of the HMS Center for Bioethics and look ahead to our evolving priorities, our impact emerges in many forms. In quantitative terms, the Center has given hundreds of HMS students a strong foundation for personal and professional ethics education throughout their careers; our faculty, students, and alumni have published hundreds of articles in leading journals; and practitioners connected to the Center have served on dozens of IRBs and internal ethics committees throughout the country.

But the impact and influence of the Center for Bioethics goes far beyond numbers. The Center's evolution has mirrored a growing public understanding of the importance of bioethics. Members of our community have been instrumental in advancing conversations around critical issues that affect countless lives. We take seriously our responsibility to promote a greater understanding of and trust in science, especially amidst growing disinformation; our faculty's incisive thinking can be heard in influential op-eds, timely policy discussions, and Congressional testimony.

This work is essential because science progresses too quickly to rely on a fixed set of rules to govern our behavior and decisions. Instead, we must equip clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and leaders with the tools to ask the right questions and thoughtfully consider the values at stake as we generate potential solutions.

As the world continues to change and evolve—sometimes gradually, sometimes overnight—it's our job to anticipate and respond to those changes with conviction. The teams and individuals highlighted in this report are extraordinary examples of this responsibility, in addition to the countless others whose contributions to our community are the reason the Center for Bioethics thrives. Their bold, creative thinking has undoubtedly led to more humane, compassionate, and ethical care for large numbers of people. As you experience our impact through this report, I hope it humbles and inspires you as much as it does me.



**Rebecca Weintraub Brendel, MD, JD**

Director, Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics

# Today's Vital Questions, Tomorrow's Big Issues

When **Leon Eisenberg, MD**, established the Division of Medical Ethics in what was then known as the Department of Social Medicine and Health Policy at Harvard Medical School, he specified that one of his primary aspirations for the new division was that it should be “subversive.” In Dr. Eisenberg’s view, this meant creating a space where faculty and students would not only advance the discipline of medical ethics, but also hold a mirror up to the medical school and encourage the entire HMS community to live up to the moral responsibility associated with the medical profession.

This clarity of purpose has only been sharpened and refined in the intervening decades. Under the leadership of **Dan W. Brock, PhD**, the division became an integral part of every HMS student’s education through the required Medical Ethics & Professionalism course; HMS sets the national standard across U.S. medical schools for the extent of ethics content required in the MD curriculum. **Robert Truog, MD, MA**, oversaw the division’s transformation into the Harvard

Medical School Center for Bioethics in 2014, reflecting an expanded scope of interest far beyond the ethics of clinical practice.

Ten years later, the Center for Bioethics delivers a robust, four-year ethics curriculum to all HMS students; runs the Fellowship in Bioethics for professionals from a wide range of disciplines; offers a Master of Science in Bioethics (MBE) both in person and online; and convenes ethicists from a variety of backgrounds at conferences, seminars, and symposia to advance our understanding of this rapidly evolving field. Our impact is both intellectual and practical, and our faculty, students, and alumni embrace complexity, drive change, and shape the field of bioethics in myriad ways.

In the spirit of Dr. Eisenberg, the Center still refuses to shy away from hard questions. We challenge ourselves to approach the lifelong study of ethics with humility, courage, and conviction—and the accomplishments of our community reflect this commitment to our shared values.

The Center for Bioethics emerged from decades of work shaping the field of medical ethics at Harvard.

**1917**

George W. Gay Lecture in Medical Ethics established

**1992**

Fellowship Program in Medical Ethics established

**FUTURE IN  
THE MAKING**

**1985**

Leon Eisenberg, MD, creates the Division of Medical Ethics and appoints Lynn Peterson, MD, as the director

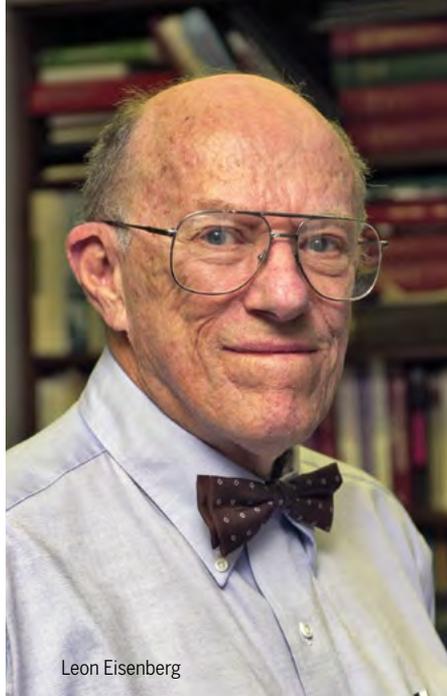
**1999**

Harvard Ethics Consortium founded

The Harvard Medical School quad under construction, 1906



Dan Brock



Leon Eisenberg



Robert Truog

*“Nobody brings an easy question to an ethics committee. The decisions that we make have implications for our health, our humanity, and the broader future of our planet.”*

**REBECCA WEINTRAUB BRENDEL, MD, JD**

Director, Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics



Rebecca Brendel

## 2006

Medical Ethics becomes a required course for all HMS students

## 2014

Division of Medical Ethics becomes the Center for Bioethics, under the leadership of Robert Truog, MD, MA

## 2023

Rebecca Weintraub Brendel, MD, JD, becomes Director of the Center for Bioethics

## 2014

Master of Science in Bioethics (MBE) established

## 2017

Further required medical ethics content added to the final phase of the MD curriculum

## 2021

Virtual Master of Science in Bioethics established

## 2025

Online Bioethics Fellowship Certificate established

# Embracing Complexity



Faculty, fellows, and students at the Center for Bioethics are driven by curiosity and compassion to ask challenging questions—and work closely together to explore possible answers. We recognize and respect the innate complexity at the heart of bioethics and take a multidisciplinary approach, drawing on a wide range of disciplines, from medicine and psychology to literature and the law.



## An Interfaith Understanding of Medical Ethics

During his fellowship, the work of **Javad Hashmi, MD, MTS, Fellow '14**, shined a light on the connections between medical ethics, theology, and human rights. He has continued this line of research at Harvard, where he is currently pursuing a PhD in Religious Studies. In a 2021 article published in the *Journal of Islamic Ethics*, “Overcoming Religious Illiteracy: Towards a More Inclusive Approach to Islamic Bioethics,” he interrogates the emerging field of Islamic bioethics and seeks to promote more inclusive discourse that makes space for reformist voices. Through his work in medical ethics, he aims to foster religious literacy and interfaith understanding, and to promote human rights globally.

## A Meaningful Contribution from the Start of Her Career

**Margaret Hayden, MD '19, MPhil**, first made an impact on the field of bioethics while she was still a student at Harvard Medical School. In 2016, her essay “Negotiating Ambiguities in Life and Death” was awarded the Henry K. Beecher Prize in Medical Ethics, which honors Dr. Beecher’s legacy as the founder of the modern field of medical ethics. Dr. Hayden’s essay contrasts discussions of brain death and the beginning of life in the medical, legal, and popular spheres. Her work became required reading for all HMS students while she herself was still a medical student. After graduating in 2019 and completing her residency, Dr. Hayden went on to work at the Equal Justice Initiative’s medical clinic in Montgomery, Alabama with her HMS classmate and husband, **Sanjay Kishore, MD '19**, providing care to individuals recently released from incarceration.

*“Life and death are biological events, but the way in which we draw the lines between these transitions is influenced by morality and ethics.”*

**MARGARET HAYDEN, MD '19, MPHIL**



Martha Montello

## Storytelling as Bioethics

Without the work of **Martha Montello, PhD**, there would likely be no such field in medicine as narrative ethics. A member of the HMS faculty since 1990, Dr. Montello has spent her career using elements of literary theory to grapple with moral questions in bioethics. “The peculiar sorts of truths that can be expressed only in stories have enduring resonance in discussions about the best ways to resolve difficult dilemmas in bioethics, clinical medicine, and even health policy,” she explains. Her courses—which numerous students have cited as a major motivating factor in their decision to enroll in one of the Center’s programs—are unique among medical schools in the United States.

*“Martha Montello’s course in narrative ethics deepens the way we engage with bioethics and shows how storytelling brings human vulnerability into focus. Her guidance creates space for resonance and resistance, moral curiosity, and integrity.”*

**RÉMY ENOCH, MBE '22**

< Harvard Medical Students transition between classes outside the Tosteson Medical Education Center.



### Advancing Pediatric Ethics

A pediatric geneticist with a certificate in Pediatric Bioethics, **Ingrid Holm, MD, MPH**, focuses primarily on the Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications (ELSI) of genomics as applied in pediatrics. Her work has addressed some of the key issues in the field: Is it ethically permissible to conduct genetic testing in cases where interventions cannot reduce future mortality? What are the ethical and psychosocial implications for newborns and their families when genomic information is incorporated into newborn screening? And what should the guidelines be for the returns of individual genomic research results to patients and families? With the perspective of the pediatric patient and their family at the heart of her work, Dr. Holm has advanced the field of pediatric ethics throughout her career.



Ingrid Holm

### Community in Fellowship

So much institutional knowledge related to the Fellowship in Bioethics lies with **Mildred Solomon, EdD**, who has served as the program's director since 2002. Over the decades, more than 300 people have completed the Fellowship, with many going on to lead bioethics centers around the country. A former president of The Hastings Center, Dr. Solomon has helped shape a culture of excellence within the Fellowship and developed a close-knit community of leading thinkers who impact the field in academia, clinical settings, and industry. While Dr. Solomon has an international reputation for research related to the ethics of end-of-life care, organ transplantation, and responsible research practices, teaching and mentorship have also constituted an essential part of her career. "Being a mentor in the Fellowship program is so rewarding, particularly because you are learning alongside someone who's already an expert in their field, and who is motivated by deep intellectual curiosity to prepare for a new role," she explains. Relationships between mentors and mentees at the Center often continue beyond the Fellowship or Masters, leading to fruitful long-term collaborations.



Mildred Solomon

*"Bioethics is such an exciting opportunity for interdisciplinarity to be done well, and it's done so well in the Fellowship. Experts from across disciplines, vocations, and geographic locations come together and enjoy a sense of kinship, both professional and personal. There's real camaraderie amongst past Fellows, who are now in influential positions all over the map."*

DANISH ZAIDI, MD, MTS, MBE '16

## Therapeutics, Ethics, and the Law

As a renowned expert on the legal dimensions of prescription drugs and medical devices, **Aaron S. Kesselheim, MD, JD, MPH**, leads policy and ethics seminars that are some of the most highly subscribed at the Center. He has testified before Congress over a dozen times on drug and device policy issues and has worked closely with the NIH, FDA, USPTO, and numerous federal and state legislative offices. Dr. Kesselheim is the founder and director of the Program On Regulation, Therapeutics, And Law (PORTAL), an interdisciplinary research center within the Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacoeconomics at Brigham and Women's Hospital. PORTAL is among the nation's most important independent academic centers focused on the connections between prescription drugs and medical devices, patient health outcomes, and regulatory practices and the law.



Thos Cochrane

## An Industry Perspective in the Classroom

**Thos Cochrane, MD, MBA, Fellow '05**, draws on experience in neurology, drug development, and academia in his roles as Director of the newly established Online Fellowship Certificate Program and Co-Director of the Fellowship in Bioethics. Dr. Cochrane split his time for more than a decade between clinical care, research, teaching, and medical ethics consultation at Brigham and Women's Hospital and HMS, before working at Biogen from 2018 to 2023. In that role, he established the Expanded Access Program for Tofersen for SOD1-ALS, which provided preapproval access to Tofersen for more than 600 people with ALS in over 30 countries.

## Creating a Compassionate Learning Environment

In recognition of his outstanding teaching in the Master of Science in Bioethics program, **Roberto Sirvent, JD, PhD**, received the 2024 Henry K. Beecher Prize for Master's Student Ethics Teaching. **J. Wesley Boyd, MD, PhD, Fellow '95**, Director of Education at the Center, describes Dr. Sirvent as "a dynamic teacher who is widely beloved by students and vitally important to the Center's teaching mission." Drawing on his background as a political theorist studying race, law, and social movements, Dr. Sirvent's teaching focuses on systemic and systematic injustice and racism, social determinants of health, humanity's intimate relationship with the environment, colonialism, and power and social relations that affect health.

*"Dr. Sirvent's attention to understanding each one of our unique backgrounds astounded me. That extra level of compassion added into his teaching was incredibly refreshing and welcome."*

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOETHICS STUDENT



< J. Wesley Boyd, Roberto Sirvent, and Rebecca Brendel

# Driving Change

From international health equity and human rights to end-of-life care and public health emergencies, the Center is addressing today's key issues, anticipating those of tomorrow, and working to ensure that our research and policy work have a tangible impact on lives around the globe. Our alumni and faculty effect change through research and advocacy, and influence practices and policies that benefit people and the systems they depend on.

## Side by Side

Through our Capstone program, MBE students work closely with faculty on the front lines of bioethics to apply what they've learned in a real-world context. Noteworthy Capstone projects from the past several years include:

- **Amy Dockser Marcus, MBE '17**, examined the ethical framework of parents of critically ill children who have led successful citizen science research collaborations. Her book based on her Capstone research, *We the Scientists: How a Daring Team of Parents and Doctors Forged a New Path for Medicine*, was published in 2023.
- **Beatrice Brown, MBE '20**, sought to redefine healing to encompass physician-assisted death as part of the removal of suffering. Brown has continued to build on this work as she pursues her JD.
- **Isabel Legarda, MD, MBE '20**, explored the role and value of narrative in ethics pedagogy by examining how the content of case studies impacted recall and the dynamics of classroom discussion. Dr. Legarda now teaches in the Essentials course at HMS.
- **Nathan Peterson, DVM, MBE '23**, surveyed veterinary technicians who had been directed to provide futile care to patients and found that an overwhelming majority had experienced moral distress with significant adverse effects as a result.

## Sharing Knowledge

Each month, the Harvard Ethics Leadership Group (HELG) brings together practicing clinicians, researchers, and faculty members from 22 healthcare organizations to discuss emerging ethical issues at the clinical and organizational levels. This collaborative approach helps to build a strong bioethics network, as ethics leaders from across the region exchange ideas, share best practices, and benefit from each other's experience and expertise. Originally conceived of as a way to facilitate communication and champion information-sharing around ethical issues at Harvard's affiliated teaching hospitals, the network has expanded to include local and regional partner hospitals.

HELG was co-founded and originally co-chaired by **Christine Mitchell, RN, MS, MTS, HEC-C**, and **Robert Truog, MD, MA**, who lent their individual perspectives as a nurse ethicist and physician to the group. This tradition of leadership by a physician and nurse ethicist team continues today as co-chairs **Jonathan Marron, MD, MPH, HEC-C**, and **Leanne Homan, RN, BSN, MBE, HEC-C**, continue the group's collaborative work.

## Advancing Bioethics in Malaysia

**Tan Hui Siu, MBBS, MBE '19**, is a leading champion for bioethics in her home country of Malaysia. She co-founded the Malaysian Bioethics Community (MBC) in 2020 in response to the ethical challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and led the editorial work for the group's published guidelines for physicians. In her role as head of the Hospital Ethics Support Service at Hospital Ampang, Dr. Tan leads active ethics consultation and develops interprofessional ethics education for clinicians at the hospital and in the surrounding region.

## A Legacy of Leadership

Without **Robert Truog, MD, MA**, there would be no HMS Center for Bioethics as we know it. Since co-founding the Fellowship Program in Medical Ethics in 1992, he has played an integral role in bioethics programming and scholarship at Harvard, serving as chair of the Harvard IRB, the Harvard Ethics Leadership Group (HELG), and the Harvard Embryonic Stem Cell Research Oversight Committee (ESCRO). Working closely with **Dan W. Brock, PhD**, Dr. Truog was instrumental in building the Division of Medical Ethics. When Dr. Brock retired in 2014, Dr. Truog reorganized the division as the Center for Bioethics and became its first director.

Under Dr. Truog's leadership, the Center expanded its programming to include in-person and online Master of Science in Bioethics programs, in addition to the foundational work of educating all HMS students in medical ethics. "One of the major contributions of our Center to the field is in providing a place for people to come together and discuss these issues," Dr. Truog says. "In bioethics, you never have all the answers. But by providing a platform to think about these questions and how they impact our society, we can better understand the factors that help us make more informed decisions."



^ Rebecca Brendel, Christine Mitchell, and Robert Truog at the annual Fall Welcome Event



## Speaking for the Voiceless

What happens when a patient is unable to make decisions about their care and doesn't have a proxy to advocate for them? Hospitals encounter surprising numbers of these unrepresented patients, leading to challenging ethical questions regarding treatment choices and consent. **David Sontag, JD, MBE, HEC-C**, co-director of the Capstone program at the Center, developed an innovative matching program that enables healthcare professionals to volunteer as patient advocates in other hospital systems. "This is an opportunity for us to help some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, those who have nobody to speak for them when they can no longer speak for themselves," he said. The program is the result of a collaboration between Sontag and his Capstone mentees **Fiona Pat, MBE '21**, and **Grace Orsatti, MBE '25**.



^ David Sontag teaching MBE students



^ Katherine Peeler in the U.S. Senate chambers

## An End to Torture in ICE Detention Centers

The severely detrimental effects of solitary confinement on detained individuals has long been acknowledged by the medical community, yet the practice is still widely used in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers. **Katherine Peeler, MD, MA, Fellow '23**, is trying to bring it to a definitive end. The Co-Medical Director of the Harvard Student Human Rights Collaborative Asylum Clinic and leader of the Peeler Immigration Lab, Dr. Peeler has put her medical expertise to work for the health rights of detained individuals, raising awareness of the issue through her writing and activism. A 2024 report that she co-authored, "Endless Nightmare: Torture and Inhuman Treatment in Solitary Confinement in U.S. Immigration Detention" reinvigorated advocacy efforts to end solitary confinement in immigration detention centers. The report details abuses and negative health effects, and includes explicit recommendations to Congress and the White House for expanding task forces, building capacity, and effecting policy change. She reminded Congressional leaders at the conclusion of her testimony: "You have the power to do something about this. It is the right thing to do."

*"Working side-by-side with Dr. Peeler gave me valuable insight into the real-world implications of our work as we sought to center the people behind the statistics. I am so grateful for the perspective I gained through our research and advocacy initiatives, which I will remember and use throughout my career."*

CAROLINE LEE, MD '23

## Bioethics in the Pandemic Era

When **Gloria Mason Ross, MBE '17**, completed her training at the HMS Center for Bioethics, she couldn't have known that in the years to follow she would be required to face not one but two public health emergencies as the Director of the National Research Ethics Board (NREB) of Liberia. First, she helped to provide bioethical frameworks during the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) as she oversaw the transition of the NREB to a pandemic-era ethics organization. Then, during the COVID-19 pandemic, she ushered the NREB through yet another transition, and made ethics recommendations around data sharing and research response to this new pandemic. These experiences solidified her belief in the essential need for regional and international collaboration in medical research and bioethics, which she's carried out as the Executive Director of the West African Consortium for Clinical Research on Epidemic Pathogens, a sub-regional body established to strengthen clinical research and foster research collaboration in West Africa.

*“My study of bioethics provided me with a framework to drive research ethics in Liberia. It has always been my passion to give back to my community, but making a difference through research has been the honor of a lifetime.”*

**GLORIA MASON ROSS, MBE '17**

## A Call for Better Pain Control in Gynecology

After hearing many reports of poorly controlled pain in gynecological procedures, **Nishita Pondugula, MS, MBE '24**, and her Capstone mentor **Louise P. King, MD, JD**, sought to identify and mitigate the root causes of this unethical practice. In their paper published in the *AMA Journal of Ethics* in February 2025, Pondugula, Dr. King, and their co-authors **Parmida Maghsoudloub** and **Vardit Ravitsky, PhD**, found that office-based gynecologic procedures are reimbursed at a lower rate than urologic and dermatologic procedures, where pain is better controlled. This lack of financial incentive—combined with gendered stereotypes in medicine—has led to wider acceptance of female pain in clinical settings. “Gynecology needs to be funded equitably compared to its peer surgical specialties to improve the health and care for patients of all backgrounds and genders,” Pondugula explains. “Many of us don't really like talking about financial aspects of medicine because that's not why we chose to go into the field. But practically, this is often what limits our ability to care for patients in the ways we hope to.”

## Bringing the World into the Classroom

“The issues that bioethicists face are complex. Our goal at the Center is to prepare those who will need to address these issues—as clinicians, lawyers, or policymakers—to interrogate their assumptions, navigate the difficult questions, and make informed and compassionate decisions,” says **Rebecca Brendel, MD, JD**, Director of the Center for Bioethics. “The best way to do that is to create an environment that mirrors what we're teaching and mimics the scenarios that people will find in the world.”

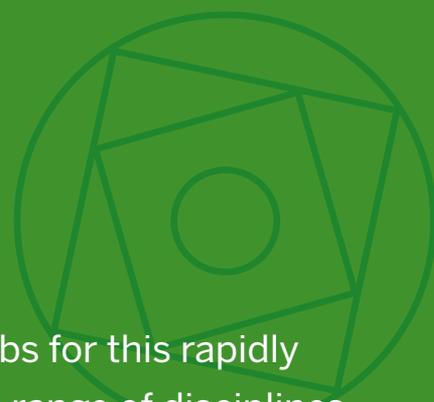
The Center's educational approach encompasses many techniques to do just this, such as the flipped classroom, where students learn outside of class through pre-recorded lectures and reading, then come to the classroom ready to present to their peers and engage in hands-on activities. Student assignments also focus on real-world engagement: capstone projects where students work closely with mentors to gain practical experience, high-stakes simulations with built-in assumptions, and writing op-eds instead of traditional research papers are examples of ways that students at the Center engage in the work of bioethics and hone essential skills from the first day of their studies.



△ Nishita Pondugula presenting her work at the MBE Capstone Symposium

# Shaping the Field

The Center for Bioethics has been one of the major hubs for this rapidly changing field, shaping how professionals from a wide range of disciplines approach some of the most fundamental questions of health and medicine. We convene experts from across the nation and around the world to evolve our understanding of bioethics, strengthening our wide-reaching yet tight-knit community of committed ethicists.



## Convening for Change

The Center serves as a major convener for experts from across disciplines. Our on-campus and virtual events help advance understanding of bioethics globally. Highlights include:

- **The 2022 Gay Lecture**, delivered by **Rueben C. Warren, DDS, MPH, DrPH, MDiv**, on his work related to population health
- **The 2018 Annual Bioethics Conference**, chaired by **Robert Truog, MD, MA**, which considered the legacy of the 1968 HMS report that proposed the concept of “brain death” as a new criterion for determining human death
- A November 2024 workshop at the **Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study** analyzing how the foundational moral framework of medicine should influence decisions about the pace and nature of AI implementations.



^ MBE students and teaching affiliates meeting at orientation



Lisa Moses

## At the Origin of Veterinary Bioethics

As one of the first veterinarians admitted to the Fellowship in Bioethics, **Lisa Moses, VMD, Fellow '16**, has been a trailblazer from the start. During her fellowship, Dr. Moses and Center faculty member **J. Wesley Boyd, MD, PhD, Fellow '95**, collaborated on the first ever national study of moral distress in veterinarians, which revealed that a large percentage of veterinarians lacked the tools to handle ethical conflict in their practice. Dr. Moses has helped to build and shape the growing field of veterinary bioethics, establishing the nation's first clinical case consultation service in veterinary medicine at Angell Memorial Animal Hospital and leading conversations around the ethics of transplanting animal-grown organs into humans.

*“Thanks to Lisa’s groundbreaking work, veterinary programs across the country now incorporate discussions of how to cope with psychological and moral distress.”*

**J. WESLEY BOYD, MD, PHD, FELLOW '95**

< Students presenting their work at the MBE Capstone Symposium



^ Christine Mitchell welcomes incoming MBE students at orientation

## A Vision Realized

When she retired as the Executive Director of the HMS Center for Bioethics in 2022, **Christine Mitchell, RN, MS, MTS, HEC-C**, evoked her initial hopes and dreams for the Center in a letter to colleagues and peers. “I often say that I caught the bioethics bug back in the 1970s. Back then, bioethics certainly existed as a field, but educational hubs like our Center did not,” she wrote. Mitchell describes envisioning a Center that wedded clinical expertise and philosophical knowledge, and would grow into a collaborative hub for convening bioethics scholars. In addition to promoting a focus on multidisciplinary, Mitchell hoped specifically to see her fellow nurses fully integrated into bioethics work.

One result of this effort was the creation of the **Nursing Ethics Collaborative**, which was developed as a platform for nursing professionals and ethicists to discuss ethical issues in healthcare, share best practices, and advance ethical nursing practice through education, research, and service. The group, which is currently co-chaired by nurses **Melissa Uveges, PhD, MAR, RN**, and **Leanne Homan, RN, BSN, MBE, HEC-C**, continues to meet quarterly. Mitchell’s shared vision with Center Director **Robert Truog, MD, MA**, was prescient, and the hard work of so many bioethics colleagues allowed their vision to become a reality, which Mitchell acknowledges in a moving closing to her letter: “My dream came true.”

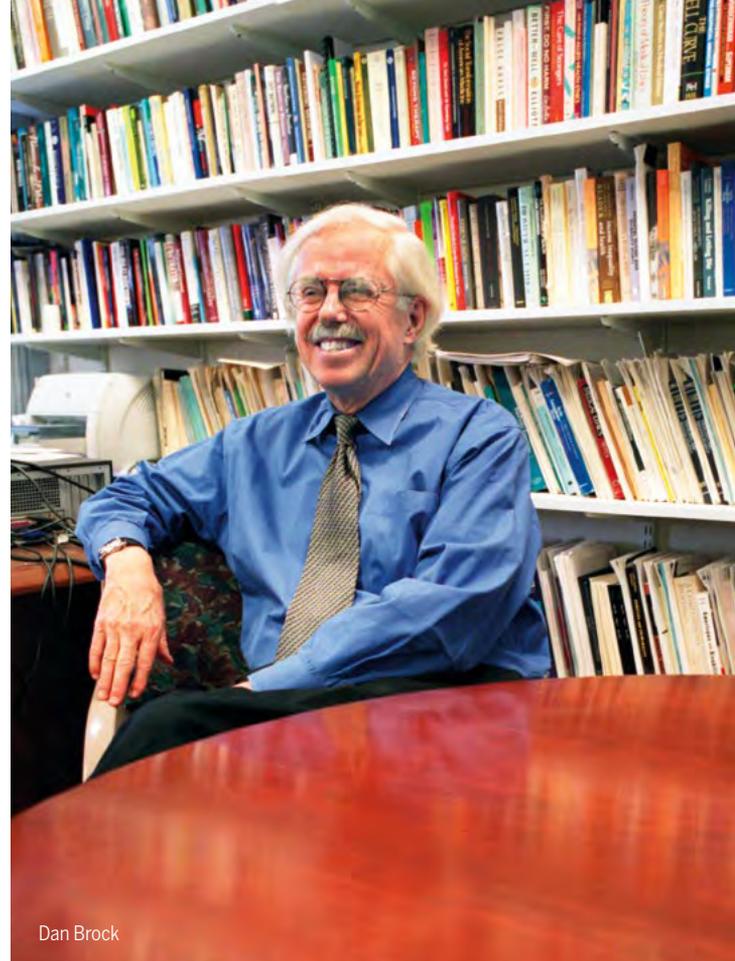


^ Patrick Smith, PhD, Fellow '14, meeting with students at the Center for Bioethics

## A Lasting Legacy

An important and influential figure both in American bioethics and in the history and development of the HMS Center for Bioethics, **Dan Brock, PhD**, was the Frances Glessner Lee Professor of Medical Ethics, Emeritus, until his death in 2020, and served as the director of the Division of Medical Ethics, which preceded the creation of the Center for Bioethics.

“There are so many interesting parallels between the development of the Center and the evolution of the field of bioethics overall, and Dan Brock in many ways facilitated the development of both,” explains **Edward Hundert, MD**. “When Dan came to Harvard he brought philosophical sophistication to clinical problems and also acknowledged that bioethics encompasses a broad spectrum of issues and approaches that are determinative of peoples’ health and wellbeing. It was really the start of something new.” Dr. Brock also contributed widely to the field through prolific publications, and on a national level as staff philosopher on the President’s Commission for the Study of Ethical Problems in Medicine in 1981-2 and as a member of the Ethics Working Group of the Clinton Task Force on National Health Reform.



Dan Brock

## A Forum for Organizational Ethics

One of the ongoing goals of the Center has been to engage broadly with both established and emerging areas of specialization within bioethics, and to convene practitioners and scholars to establish a collaborative learning community that reflects the evolving field. The **Organizational Ethics Consortium**, which was held for nine years, was a key component in this effort, and provided a forum for discussion of organizational-level ethical issues and processes to address them. **James Evan Sabin, MD**, and **Charlotte H. Harrison, PhD, JD, MPH, HEC-C, Fellow '01**, originated the consortium to build and expand this underexplored area, and were later joined by **Kelsey Berry, PhD**, as co-chair. Topics included how hospitals and health systems, ACOs, pharmaceutical and insurance companies shaped and responded to ethical issues related to policies, procedures, resource allocation decisions, and social movements.

*“The Center creates space for people from many different professional backgrounds to learn from one another and relate that learning back to their own practice.”*

**KELSEY BERRY, PHD**

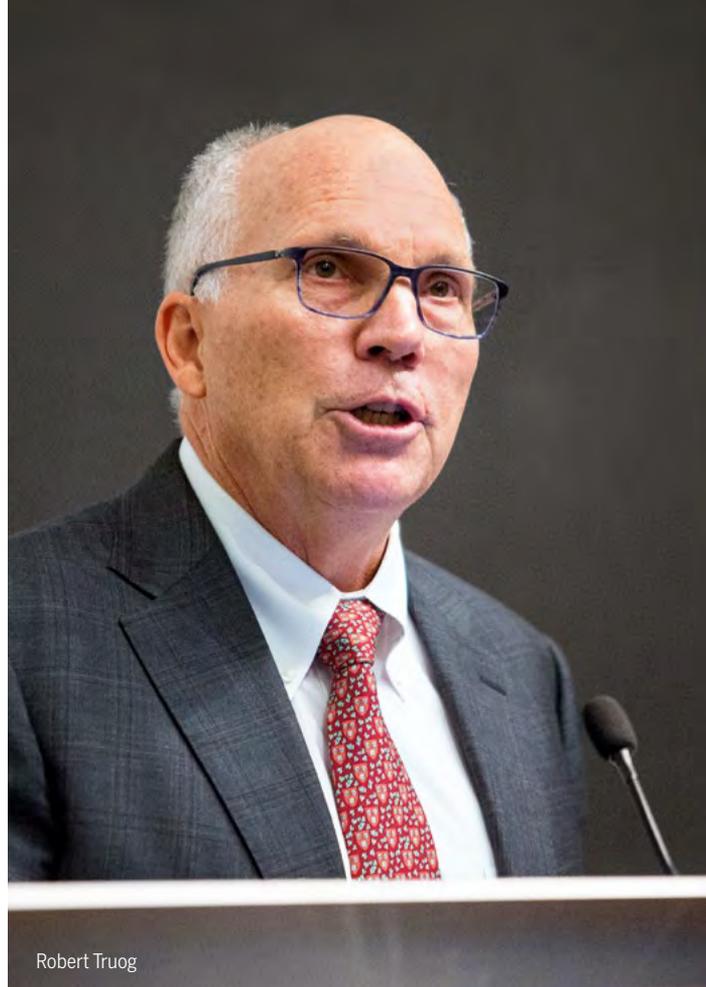




### Bioethics in the National Spotlight

With the COVID-19 pandemic came an increased awareness among the general public of bioethics issues. Ethical distribution and rationing of resources, health equity and access to care, and governmental and individual responsibilities with regard to the health of the collective are just some examples of bioethical topics that were suddenly top of mind.

With this focus came an opportunity for the Center for Bioethics to play an important and visible role as a leader and thought leader in the public sphere. Early in the pandemic, **Robert Truog, MD, MA**, **Christine Mitchell, RN, MS, MTS, HEC-C**, and HMS Dean **George Daley, MD, PhD**, published what would become a much-cited article that addressed the unprecedented need for rationing of medical goods—and particularly ventilators—in the United States. Dr. Truog (then Director of the Center) and Mitchell (then Executive Director) were also named to the Crisis Standards of Care Advisory Working Group convened by the Massachusetts Commissioner of Public Health to prepare guidance in the event of a scarcity of necessary medical treatment resources in the Commonwealth.



Robert Truog

### A Century of Innovative Thinking

Established in 1917, the **George W. Gay Lecture in Medical Ethics** is the oldest endowed lectureship at Harvard Medical School, and possibly the oldest medical ethics lectureship in the United States. Dr. Gay, an 1868 graduate of HMS, provided the funds to support a series of lectures “upon wise and proper methods of conducting the business of physicians, as relates to fees, collections, investments, etc.” More than 100 years later, the Gay Lecture continues to feature distinguished physicians, scientists, researchers, and social observers who offer insightful commentary on some of the most pressing issues in bioethics. Notable lecturers have included Elie Wiesel, Margaret Mead, Paul Farmer, Elizabeth Kübler Ross, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and many others. Most recently, the Gay Lecture was presented on the emerging issues of AI in medicine by **Effy Vayena, PhD**, chair of bioethics at the Swiss Institute of Technology in Zurich.



## An Ethics Education for HMS Students

The Center for Bioethics takes to heart the mission of providing unparalleled ethics education to all medical students at HMS. “We hope medical students will come away with a new appreciation of how bioethics issues apply to their own clinical experiences. We are not just teaching knowledge, but skills and attitudes that will carry practitioners through their careers,” explains **Edward Hundert, MD**, who co-directs the bioethics section of the required **Essentials of the Profession I and II**, with **Louise King, MD, JD**, and **David Urion, MD, FAAN, Fellow ’15**, respectively.

Essentials I (taken in the first year) and Essentials II (taken after a year of clinical training) position medical students to interrogate and navigate the social contexts of health and health care. Taught as a series of core topics by experts from across Harvard, the course addresses ethics, social medicine, clinical epidemiology and population health, health policy, and healthcare delivery and leadership. Beyond Essentials, HMS students’ ethics training includes classes and seminars that explore ethical topics such as digital professionalism and truth-telling and confidentiality.



^ Edward Hundert welcoming students



< Effy Vayena presenting the 2024 Gay Lecture

# Impact in Brief

**345**

MBE graduates  
as of May 2024

**319**

Fellowship alumni  
as of May 2024

**OVER  
100**

faculty members and  
course instructors  
teach in core programs  
at the Center

**OVER  
40**

faculty members are involved  
in medical students' bioethics  
curriculum at HMS

**57** alumni teach in  
core programs  
at the Center

**22**

healthcare institutions  
participate in the  
Harvard Ethics Leadership  
Group (HELG)

**10K+**

subscribers to the Center's  
biweekly newsletter

**13**

Center alumni currently  
serve as heads of hospital  
ethics committees



## Publications in peer-reviewed journals

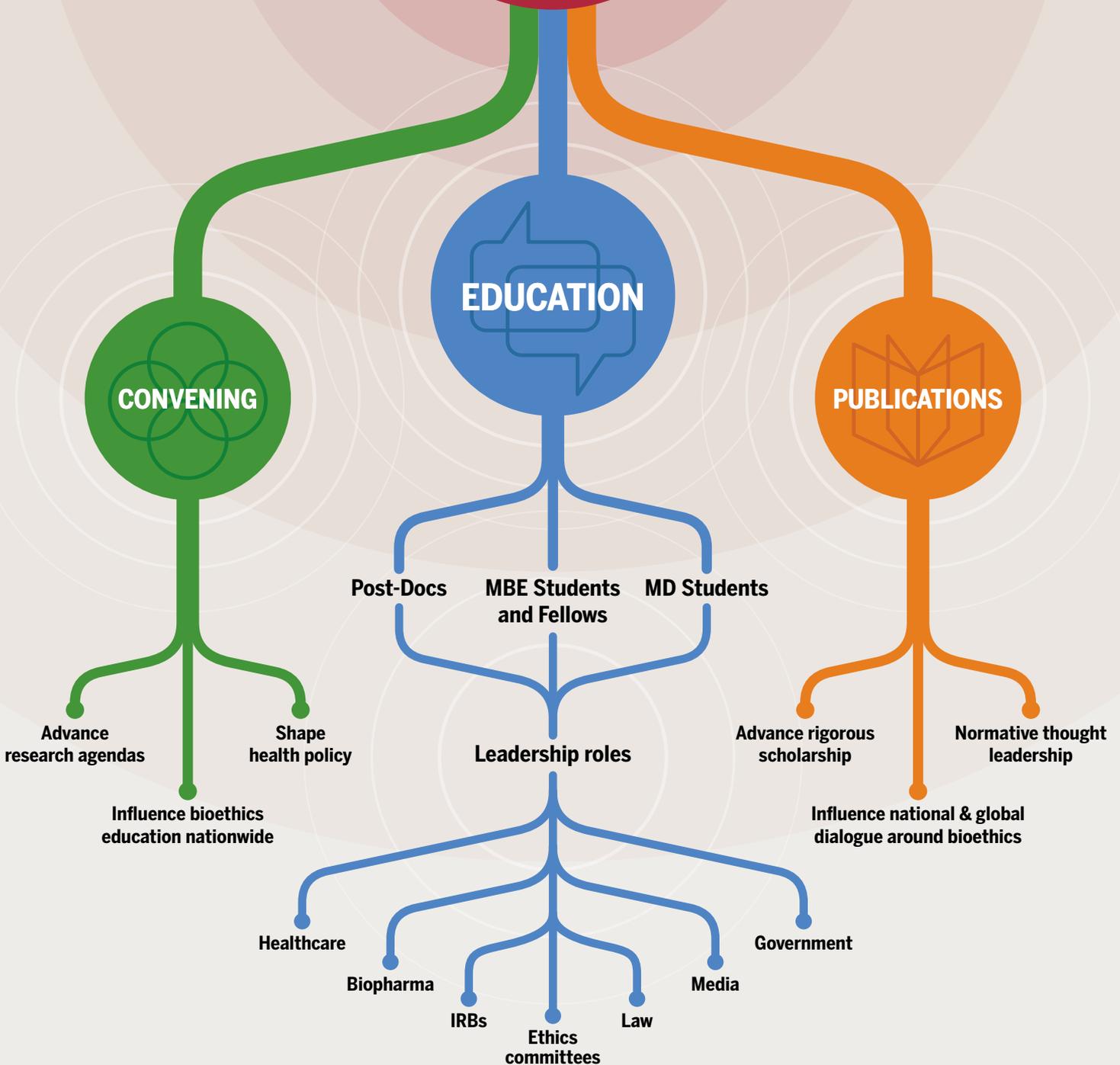
Scan the QR code (right) to view a curated selection  
of publications in peer-reviewed journals authored  
by Center community members since 2014.



[bit.ly/HMSCFB-Publications](https://bit.ly/HMSCFB-Publications)

# PATHS TO IMPACT

The impact of the HMS Center for Bioethics emanates from the ripple effects of the people we educate, the convenings we host for thought leadership, and the publications of our faculty, students, and alumni.





## A VISION FOR THE FUTURE: Centering Bioethics

Many of today's most compelling and controversial issues revolve around questions of bioethics. How do we ensure that a resource as powerful as medical AI is used for the health of our communities and our planet, and is equitably apportioned? Can we make certain that new medical devices are ethically distributed and accessible to the populations who need them most? How can we work within the confines of legal structures while making decisions that are grounded in scientific evidence and moral integrity?

The HMS Center for Bioethics and our extended community of alumni and partners play an essential leadership role, grappling with today's—and tomorrow's—most pressing biomedical issues, developing impactful scholarship, and convening leaders in the field to advance knowledge and implement creative solutions.

With this responsibility of leadership in mind, the Center has outlined four strategic areas of focus:

- **Artificial Intelligence in Medicine:** Addressing one of the most disruptive and potentially transformative technological advances of our day
- **Moral Leadership in Medicine:** Considering how values, science, and integrity ground us in the decisions about the health care ecosystem and its impact on physician practice
- **Global Health Equity:** Ensuring that people around the globe have fair and equitable access to health services, emerging technologies, and lifesaving medicines
- **Clinical Ethics:** Continuing to center core ethical issues in clinical practice in our work

Selected because of their pertinence, importance, and urgency, these are areas where our expertise and knowledge will ensure important advances with enduring impact on thought and practice.

## Harnessing Ethics Thinking for AI Implementation

How can emerging AI technology be used ethically to better health outcomes around the world? A trio of interrelated events have begun to address the question:

- **The Responsible AI for Social and Ethical Healthcare (RAISE) Symposium**, hosted in 2023 by the Department of Biomedical Informatics (DBMI) and co-sponsored by the Center, brought together experts in ethics and policy, patient advocacy and economics to develop principles for an international framework for the safe and ethical use of AI in healthcare.
- The Center and DBMI hosted a **Radcliffe Accelerator Workshop** that convened leaders of AI in Medicine (AIM) to address how core bioethical values can be used to influence decisions about the pace and terms of AIM implementation.
- **The 2024 Gay Lecture** by Effy Vayena, PhD, provided an assessment of ethical challenges and transformational benefits of AI in medicine.



^ MBE students listen to a seminar

## Moral Leadership in Medicine Workshop

How do we build a better, more ethical future for health care? This was the guiding question behind a 2024 workshop on moral leadership in medicine that the HMS Center for Bioethics hosted in collaboration with the Advanced Ethics in Leadership Program (AELP). Participants reflected on some of the most important ethical dilemmas confronting health care leaders, such as post-pandemic allocation of resources, the changing context of rights and access to abortion care, and threats to practitioners of prosecution and litigation. Findings and analysis from the day will be included in a special issue of *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine* focused on the ethics of health care institutions and systems.



^ 2024 Moral Leadership in Medicine Workshop



# Collaborative Impact, Powerful Reach

The Center was envisioned as a community of thinkers and learners devoted to a collaborative effort to advance questions related to bioethics, and ten years later it has surpassed what anyone could have imagined. Our community is unparalleled. Our faculty, students, and alumni bring an impressive depth of experience across multiple disciplines and varied professional areas; they come from every corner of the globe and fan out around the world to share their expertise, lead by example, and engage in vital, meaningful work. Our alumni are inventing and furthering the field. Our faculty's commitment to mentorship has developed a constellation of students and alumni connected to the Center and to each other.

We are proud to have helped to foster an engaged and impactful bioethics community in Boston, around the country, and around the world. Our vital work will only become more necessary as technologies advance and the world becomes ever more complex. Inspired by the outstanding accomplishments of the first ten years of our tenure, we will continue to grapple with the most difficult questions, to prepare the next generation of practitioners and scholars, and to ensure that bioethics stands at the center of the biomedical world.





@HMSBioethics #HMSBioethics



## CENTER FOR BIOETHICS

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### Join Us

Philanthropic support for the Center expands access to bioethics education for dedicated students and provides essential funding for research and scholarship.

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