



center for
christian bioethics

INSIDE LOOK

AUTUMN 2020

Bioethics Grand Rounds: Judge Tara Reilly

On October 1, through the now standard platform of Zoom, Judge Tara Reilly gave a lecture titled *Checks and Balances: critical intersections between the medical and legal in decision making for our most vulnerable community members*.

As a superior court judge for San Bernardino, Judge Reilly took listeners on a journey from what she described as the “32,000-foot perspective.” More specifically, she discussed the work she does for the “unbefriended” or unrepresented patient. Wasting no time, she juxtaposed the governing principles for both the legal and medical professions: due process and equal protection under the law, and the Hippocratic Oath. She then explained conservatorship and the legal power over medical decisions of the conservator. The main portion of the lecture covered Probate Code 3200, which deals with the “unbefriended” or unrepresented patient.

As an experienced expert in the law, she took the audience through the process of filing a petition to determine if an unrepresented patient lacks decision making capacity. While the medical and legal professions may sometimes find each other at odds, Judge Reilly made it clear that, like the healthcare professional, she seeks to advocate on behalf of the patient. Her hope is that medical and legal professionals can learn to collaborate more fully in the future to ensure respect, fairness and care for society’s most vulnerable patients.

Click here to view the
recorded lecture on our
website bioethics.llu.edu.

American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH)

22nd Annual Conference

This year, ASBH went virtual, but that did not prevent a number of LLU students and faculty members from giving excellent presentations:

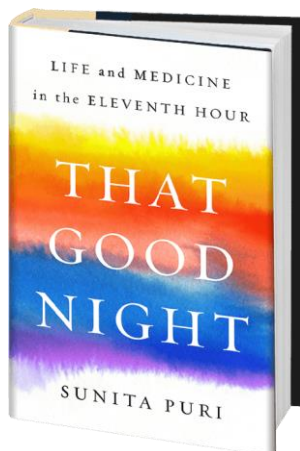
- Giulia Faison, MD and Grace Oei, MD, MA
Are Babies Conceived Through Artificial Reproductive Technology 'Worth' More? The Impact of Cost on Decision Making in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
- Grace Oei, MD, MA and Gina Mohr, MD
Lung Procurement in Donation after Cardiac Death: Can Air Lead to Breath?
- David A. Deemer, MA, MD Candidate
Ethics of Health Information Systems and Public Procurement: A Case Study of the VA EHR Modernization Project
- Matthew L. Hagele, MA, MD Candidate, Calvin Thomsen, PhD, and Adam Borecky, MD, MA
Ethical Concerns in Psilocybin-Assisted Therapy
- Martha Duah, MA, MD Candidate
Racial Disparities in Psychotic Diagnosis: Ethical Analysis and Call to Action
- Nina Khanna, MA, DDS candidate, Whitney M. Braun, PhD, MPH, MA
A Smile in the Mail: Ethical Concerns Regarding Safe Treatment in the Direct-to-Consumer Orthodontics Industry

Upcoming Medicine & Bioethics Grand Rounds: Sunita Puri, MD

At noon, on November 4, 2020, Sunita Puri, MD will present at a joint medical oncology and bioethics Grand Rounds titled, *Words as Tools: The Challenge and Magic of Family Meetings*. Dr. Puri will be presenting her reflections on end-of-life care based on her experience as the Medical Director of the Palliative Medicine and Supportive Care Service at the Keck Hospital and Norris Cancer Center of the University of Southern California, where she also serves as the Chair of the Ethics Committee.

At USC, Dr. Puri teaches principles of palliative medicine and advanced clinical ethics to medical students, residents, and fellows. She has been interviewed by the *New York Times*, the BBC, and NPR

to discuss topics ranging from physician aid-in-dying to the experience of practicing palliative care. She has published essays in *The New York Times*, *Slate*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, and *JAMA-Internal Medicine*. In 2019, Dr. Puri's highly acclaimed book, *That Good Night: Life and Medicine in the Eleventh Hour*, was published.



Wednesday, November 4, 12pm

Zoom ID: 295 104 2679
Passcode: 2020

[Click here to access a flyer about the event](#)



Faculty Scholar Spotlight: Oleksandr Dubov, PhD



As the leader of the Center for Christian Bioethics Faculty Scholar program, Dr. Dubov exemplifies the very definition of scholarship. A recent example is his timely article titled, [*The Value and Ethics of Using Technology to Contain the COVID-19 Epidemic*](#). The article, published in the *American Journal of Bioethics*, addresses ethical issues during the current pandemic. After earning his doctoral degree in ethics from Duquesne University, Dr. Dubov completed post-doctoral studies at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on AIDS at Yale University's School of Public Health. He has continued his HIV prevention work in collaboration with the UCLA Center for HIV Identification, Prevention, and Treatment Services.

Dr. Dubov was able to find a few minutes to chat over Zoom about his current projects and research:

Dr. Dubov was able to find a few minutes to chat over Zoom about his current projects and research:

Recently, you published in the American Journal of Bioethics. What are the most important ethical issues you considered?

The idea behind the article was that contact tracing was a big issue and many countries around the world had started using technology for this purpose. I talked about China, Israel, and Taiwan as well as Google and Apple who were all using or promising to use apps for contact tracing. I wanted to outline the ethical issues of consent within the app, what kind of data it stores, and who has access. Especially during public health emergencies like the one we are living through, governments are able to get much more permission and emergency authorization which can potentially not go away, even after the epidemic is over.

Regarding your work with HIV prevention, what are some of the important ethical issues you are addressing?

Just as we are experiencing now, with people are getting tired of COVID and wanting to start ignoring it, there are very similar attitudes around HIV. In many conversations that I've had with general providers who aren't necessarily working with HIV or epidemiology, their perception is that it's not really a big threat anymore, which is in a way true, but if you look at the numbers, you want the number of infections to go down every year and it has plateaued and even now it's on the rise, especially in certain vulnerable populations. So I think the first ethical issue is with complacency with the threat of HIV and not understanding the impact it has on certain populations.

The other bioethical issue is regarding problems with access. If we have very effective tools for prevention, how do we help providers increase access to this kind of care so people who need it can actually get it. For example, one of the studies I am working on now is looking at drug users (prevention is very effective for drug users). But if you look at the trends, there are many drug users who could be prescribed preventive care, but are not. My assumption is that this is because of the stigma and bias against people who use drugs. So how we educate providers to avoid these biases, is something I am looking at. We associate so much stigma with this disease, even many years after it first started. How do we help remove that stigma?

How has COVID in combination with the ongoing HIV epidemic changed the nature of HIV prevention?

Yes, definitely. We know that HIV is syndemic, meaning that it is a confluence of many factors. For example, people who have mental health issues are at much higher risk of HIV. Drug users and people of certain socioeconomic classes are more at risk of HIV and COVID exacerbated all of that. The pandemic has a huge toll on mental health, and people don't always cope in the healthiest ways, which puts them at risk of infection. Harm reduction strategies for preventing HIV are difficult to carry out now due to the virus. COVID has exacerbated the factors that can put a person at risk for HIV, but it has also made it difficult to provide care.



CCB Welcomes New Graduate Assistants

The Center for Christian Bioethics (CCB) is pleased to introduce three new Graduate Assistants who are joining the team for the current school year. Nicolás Belliard, Hazel Ezeribe, and Nathaniel Jung are graduate students in LLU's dual degree program studying for their MA in Bioethics in the School of Religion in conjunction with their studies for their MD degree in the School of Medicine.



Nicolás Belliard

After graduating from Walla Walla University in June, Nicolás deferred his acceptance to LLUSM to volunteer at a medical clinic in Bolivia. When the COVID-19 pandemic forced him to reevaluate his plans, he applied to the Bioethics MA. This year, he will be helping produce the *Inside Look* in addition to helping run the website.



Hazel Ezeribe

Hazel is a rising 4th year medical student at the Loma Linda School of Medicine, who is currently taking a gap year to pursue the MA in Bioethics degree with the School of Religion. In the past, she has worked with previous graduate assistants to plan and manage the Center for Christian Bioethics' podcast: *A Medical History in Color*. She will be continuing that project this year as well as pursuing other interests with the CCB.



Nathaniel Jung

After completing three years of medical school, Nathaniel has decided to take a year to complete an MA in Bioethics. After completing his first clinical year, he felt that learning more about the ethics involved in clinical decision making would help him to become a more rounded physician. As a graduate assistant, he will help manage the websites associated with the Christian Center for Bioethics.



LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY
HEALTH

Center for Christian Bioethics

Pictured below is the 2020-2021 CCB Team:

Gerald Winslow, Director, Nico Belliard, Graduate Assistant, MaryJane Rasnic, Administrative Liaison, Hazel Ezeribe, Graduate Assistant, Nate Jung, Graduate Assistant, Grace Oei, Associate Director.

Special thanks to Nico Belliard for his work in the production of this edition of the newsletter.

