Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to introduce the thirtieth anniversary volume of The Journal of Contemporary Health Law and Policy. It is with a heavy heart that we celebrate thirty years of quality legal scholarship on topics ranging from bioethics and end-of-life care to religious liberty and The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, as our community was stricken this past year with news of the death of a loyal friend, contributor, and visionary Godfather of the Journal—the esteemed Dr. Edmund D. Pellegrino. In his honor, Professor George P. Smith II has composed a heartfelt dedication, highlighting Dr. Pellegrino’s early inspiration for the creation and sponsorship of this Journal. Professor Smith’s eloquent historical discussion of Dr. Pellegrino’s vision—to provide a forum for the promotion of social justice with an interdisciplinary journal focusing on science, medicine, philosophy, faith, and the law—is not to be missed. Indeed, as these pages have memorialized for the past three decades, the evolving world of medical science and technology has placed bioethics—a discipline Dr. Pellegrino has been credited with founding—at the center of the ongoing academic and legal discussions of patient care. Surely the relevance of these considerations endures with every new innovation. We are honored to dedicate this volume to the memory of Dr. Pellegrino and his contribution to his profession.

We are rejoined by Professor George J. Annas, chair of the Department of Health Law, Bioethics & Human Rights, at Boston University School of Public Health, and Professor at Boston University School of Medicine, and School of Law. Professor Annas and his daughter, Catherine L. Annas, an alumna of the Journal and past contributor with 15 years of experience in health law, have contributed a discussion of potential ethical lapses implicated by the “SUPPORT Study.” Professor Smith argues for the proper philosophical framework for bioethical decision-making. Professor Lucia A. Silecchia publishes a critical discussion of the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Rev. Professor Raymond C. O’Brien rejoins us by highlighting the implications of mental incapacity on an aging population and the duties of attorneys to their clients.

On behalf of the staff and editors of the Journal, I would like to express my sincerest thanks to our faculty advisor, Professor Smith, for all of his support. Professor Smith has been a stalwart for high expectations, overseeing the quality and integrity of this publication since its founding. We are indebted to him, and I would like to thank him personally for his guidance and wisdom throughout a time of change for legal scholarship and this Journal.

BRIAN J. FARNKOFF
Editor in Chief