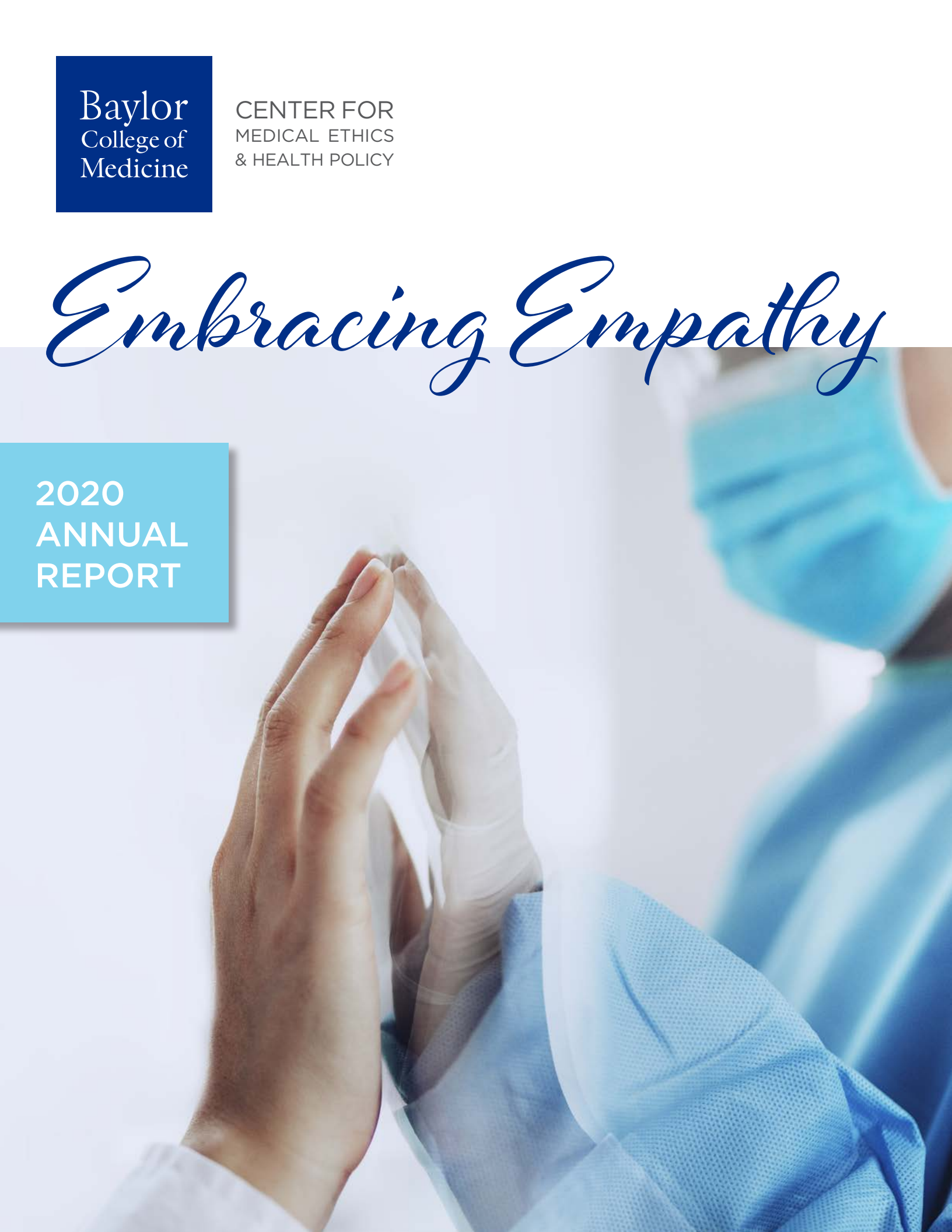


Baylor
College of
Medicine

CENTER FOR
MEDICAL ETHICS
& HEALTH POLICY

Embracing Empathy

2020
ANNUAL
REPORT





Director's Corner

We are living in an era of crisis and transformation. I can confidently say that 2020 has not been what I (or anyone else) expected. And yet, while we are all more physically distant than ever before, this harrowing time is igniting some powerful conversations, connections and changes within our society and our Center. Empathy is a central theme in this dialogue.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the senseless killing of Black men and women while in police custody have sparked despair and outrage across the country. Events like these have polarized us as a nation, and fundamental ethical issues like promoting public health and advocating for social justice have become a catalyst to fuel public discord and entrench political partisanship.

These circumstances have challenged us to truly reflect on our commitments, our purpose and our passions. And we are doing it with intense empathy — focusing on better understanding others' choices, decisions, life circumstances and points of view. We are committed to being there for one another and have done even more to encourage an environment and workplace that is open, honest and fair. I deeply believe that embracing empathy as a core value is the only way to foster stronger relationships, build connections and drive meaningful behavior change.

Empathy stands out in this annual report, where we share both our accomplishments and our ambitions. It is built into what we do every day, what we have learned and where we hope to go.

Over the last year, we have mobilized to help address COVID-19, contributed and celebrated novel research, grown our clinical partnerships, expanded our education efforts and deepened our relationships with the community. We have continued to prove the power of bringing people together (albeit virtually these days) to stimulate innovation, unleash fresh ideas and drive growth.

As a Center, we are eager to lean into the uneasy and uncomfortable path ahead. We embrace the uncertainty as our new normal and stand ready to continue to uncover and explore the most pressing policy and ethical issues impacting us all, while remembering that it is our humanity that ties us together. Just as we are researchers, educators and ethicists, we are also parents, siblings, relatives and friends, as are the people we work with, teach, study and care for.

We truly believe in our collective ability to make progress and improve our society. Thank you for joining us as, together, we prepare for the work that lies ahead.

Take care and stay safe!

Amy Lynn McGuire, J.D., Ph.D.

2020 HIGHLIGHTS

A SNAPSHOT

MOBILIZING TO ADDRESS COVID-19:

Actively responded to the global pandemic by creating new policies and perspectives, forming collaborations and providing care and education to ultimately improve patient outcomes.



Helped develop triage policies and guidelines locally, regionally and nationally



20+ COVID-19 research and writing projects



Frequent media engagement to discuss ethical and policy issues related to COVID-19

CONTRIBUTING & CELEBRATING NOVEL RESEARCH:

Dedicated to uncovering *insights* to enable better decision-making for all stakeholders.

24

ACTIVE PROJECTS

↑30%

from 2019

22

NEW GRANT SUBMISSIONS

↑45%

with a focus on genomics, neuroethics, personalized medicine, learning health systems and health policy.

Launched inaugural *Baruch A. Brody Lecture in Bioethics* in collaboration with Rice University and Houston Methodist Hospital and are gearing up for our second annual award on Feb. 2, 2021.

SERVING AS A TRUSTED PARTNER TO HOSPITALS:

Supported hospitals through our *ethics consultation programs* and events, creating lasting value and significant medical benefit for patients and the health care team.



Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center

HOUSTON
Methodist
LEADING MEDICINE

150
consults
per year

450
consults
per year

Our Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center service increased consult volume by 32%.

Our Houston Methodist consult service remains one of the largest and most well-regarded programs in the country, with a stable consult volume.

Hosted a national, in-person conference in partnership with Houston Methodist and Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center, "Evolving Clinical Ethics: A Working UnConference."



with more than 90 participants

Expanded Grand Rounds offerings at both institutions.



NURTURING & GROWING LEARNERS: Expanded collaborations, combining our strengths with key partners to offer more opportunities and engage more people.

- Continued to “plus up” our **offerings** at all levels (Undergraduate Medical Education, Graduate Medical Education, Continuing Medical Education and Fellowships)
- Involved in the launch of the Humanities, Ethics, Arts, and Law (HEAL) curriculum for EnMed, an innovative engineering medical school option created by Texas A&M University and Houston Methodist Hospital

DEEPENING OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Proactively used our voice to share our story, foster relationships and continue our ongoing search for ways to bring people together.

- Raised the visibility and accessibility of Baylor as a national leader in health policy and medical ethics through position statements, media engagements and special events
- Approved to host our institution’s first TEDx (an independently organized TED event) entitled BaylorCollegeofMedicine TEDx to be held in fall 2021 (details forthcoming)
- Continued to expand our **Narrative Medicine** program through storytelling and community events



MOBILIZING to ADDRESS COVID-19

Our focus on examining the ethical and policy issues raised by this global pandemic has enabled us to

play a key role in overcoming the challenges we face together. We recognize that issues about triage and allocation of scarce resources like ventilators, ICU beds and ambulances are deeply personal and difficult. It is our role to ask the uncomfortable questions. We make it our priority to get to know the people involved (their values, desires and needs) who are impacted in the short and long-term.



These are some of the ways we are applying our skills, time and resources to combat COVID-19:

- Since February 2020, we have been actively involved in **developing local policies** related to COVID-19. We helped to draft resource allocation policies at Houston Methodist and Baylor St. Luke’s Medical Center and worked with representatives from CHI regional and CommonSpirit national to create system-wide policies.
- We were asked to **chair the TMC Ethics Workstream and wrote TMC guidance for COVID-19 resource allocation.**
- We formed and are leading a **statewide ethics consortium to connect ethicists across the state of Texas and address ethical issues** affecting health care in Texas, including engaging with stakeholders and medical associations across the state.
- Our faculty have spearheaded more than **20 research projects and papers related to COVID-19**, including projects related to resource allocation, physician experience and decision making, clinical ethics practice, patient experience and vaccine trials.
- In collaboration with the Menninger Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, we administered **a national survey to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on mental health.**

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE STATEWIDE CONSORTIUM

When the pandemic hit, Houston doubled down, and we jumped in to develop protocols and processes for what seemed to be the inevitable. And then as spring became summer, our city and hospitals were deluged with COVID-19. As a Center focused on the hardest ethical and policy problems, change is always constant.

The pandemic is exacerbating existing economic and healthcare disparities, which impacts hospitals in a multitude of ways. We were prepared for this in every sense of the word and yet were extremely relieved and appreciative when colleagues across the country reached out offering help, support and learning.

Specifically, over the last few months we have shared resources and knowledge about how to implement scarce medical resource policies in a way that's not discriminatory and in accordance

with the laws and mandates coming out from our political leaders.

By harnessing the group's collective knowledge, the consortium enables us to share stories, celebrate successes and learn from mistakes. Our hope is that this becomes a long-term, transformational collaborative that can explore issues from disaster preparedness to spiritual care and everything in between.

To learn more on the Texas Ethics Consortium, check out this recent profile in [TMC News](#) or contact Claire Horner (Claire.horner@bcm.edu)

It was from these conversations that the **TEXAS ETHICS CONSORTIUM** was borne with a specific goal of addressing statewide and federal laws and mandates.

A GROUP OF

35

INDIVIDUALS FROM ACROSS THE STATE, AND GROWING

SAMPLE OF COVID-19 RELATED PUBLISHED RESEARCH & PAPERS

Annals of Internal Medicine Ventilator Triage Policies During the COVID-19 Pandemic at U.S. Hospitals Associated with Members of the Association of Bioethics Program Directors

Science Self-experimentation, Ethics, and Regulation of Vaccines

Journal of Medical Ethics Payment of COVID-19 Challenge Trials: Underpayment is a Bigger Worry than Overpayment

Journal of Occupational Health Essential, not Peripheral: Addressing Health Care Workers' Mental Health Concerns During the COVID-19 Pandemic

American Journal of Bioethics Reconceptualizing Triage to Incorporate Principles of Risk and Uncertainty: An Example from Deep Brain Stimulation Patients with Treatment-Resistant Disorders

American Journal of Bioethics Ethical Challenges in Advance Care Planning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Journal of American College of Cardiology Scarce-Resource Allocation and Patient Triage During the COVID-19 Pandemic: JACC Review Topic of the Week

BMJ Blog:

[We Should Sit This One Out: Why Ethicists Should Not Help Discuss Treatment Allocation Decisions](#)

[Proving Our Worth: Why Clinical Ethicists Should Help Discuss Treatment Allocation Decisions](#)

CONTRIBUTING & CELEBRATING NOVEL RESEARCH

Every day, our team goes to work to solve some of the most complex ethical and policy issues. To do this requires grit and curiosity. It's asking some of the age-old questions, but turning them on their head. We have to be relentlessly inquisitive and open to possibilities, new ideas and new partnerships. It's putting ourselves in the mind of the patient, family, doctor, interviewee or caregiver.

It's this approach that's enabled us to increase our research portfolio to over \$4 million.

27

ACTIVE
PROJECTS

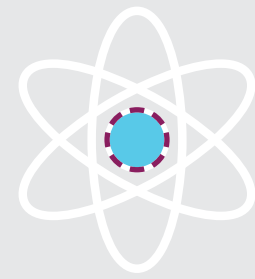
↑30%
FROM 2019

22

NEW GRANT
SUBMISSIONS

↑45%
FROM 2019

This includes 27 active projects and 22 new grant submissions. We're focused on issues like genomics, personalized medicine and learning health systems, neuroethics and mental health, public health ethics, health equity and social determinants of health. We also examine, analyze and think deeply about hospital and healthcare practices and policies and write about the challenging theoretical questions that arise in the course of caring for our sickest patients.



SAMPLE OF PUBLISHED RESEARCH

- ***Annals of Family Medicine:*** Physician Involvement in Promoting Gun Safety
- ***Pediatrics:*** Teenage Use of Smartphone Applications for Menstrual Cycle Tracking
- ***Nature Reviews Genetics:*** The Road Ahead in Genetics and Genomics
- ***Genetics In Medicine:***
 - Airmen and Health-Care Providers' Attitudes Toward the Use of Genomic Sequencing in the US Air Force: Findings From the Milseq Project
 - Psychiatric Genomics Researchers' Perspectives on Best Practices for Returning Results to Individual Participants
- ***American Journal Of Public Health:*** Engaging Community Members to Eradicate Health Disparities
- ***Chest:*** Critical Conversations Say This, Not That
- ***American Journal Of Bioethics:*** What the HEC-C? An Analysis of The Healthcare Ethics Consultant-Certified Program: One Year In

RECOGNIZING FUTURE INNOVATORS

In 2019/2020 we launched the inaugural Baruch A. Brody Lecture in Bioethics in collaboration with Rice University and Houston Methodist. This award honors a junior or mid-career scholar in the field who embodies the values and virtues that were central to Dr. Brody's scholarly life and work at the three sponsoring institutions. Holly Fernandez Lynch, J.D., M.B.E, of Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania, was named the inaugural recipient of this award last year and gave a lecture about **conflicts of conscience in medicine**. We are pleased to announce our 2021 recipient is Camisha Russell Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Oregon and a Co-Editor of *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*.



HOLLY FERNANDEZ LYNCH, J.D., M.B.E.



Join us February 2, 2021 at noon CST to hear Camisha Russell's virtual guest lecture.

[Learn more:](#) 



CAMISHA RUSSELL, PH.D.

SERVING AS A TRUSTED PARTNER TO HOSPITALS



A large part of our work is supporting hospitals through **clinical ethics consultations**. Our goal is to be there for the healthcare team, patients and families before, during and after key moments in their journey. We serve as a mediator working across disciplines and departments. Through these efforts, we've continued to build our robust clinical ethics consultation program at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center and Houston Methodist Hospital.

We also provide numerous education sessions to both hospitals, including **Ethics Grand Rounds** on topics such as ethical considerations in caring for patients with COVID-19. We have been working closely with leadership at both hospitals to develop triage policies and manage allocation of scarce resources and other ethical controversies raised by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In February 2020, we showcased our know-how and brought leaders in the field together when we hosted a national conference entitled **"Evolving Clinical Ethics: A Working UnConference."** This provided an opportunity for clinical ethicists to collaboratively explore new and unresolved issues using an innovative meeting format. Over 90 people attended the three-day conference here in Houston and discussed topics such as pitching an ethics service to an administrator, culturally competent ethics consultation and managing conflicts surrounding brain death.

NURTURING & GROWING LEARNERS

*Focusing on **education** is foundational to our Center. It's at the core of why we exist, and it's needed now, more than ever. We seek to make a difference in the lives of our students — whoever and wherever they are. These are some of the ways we are transforming our offerings:*

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION:

Our **Medical Ethics Pathway** continues to have the highest enrollment of any pathway at the college, and 24 students completed the Ethics Pathway in 2020. Our **Health Policy Pathway** continues to grow and successfully launched the fourth and final course, where students were paired with faculty in various departments and centers at Baylor, as well as institutions across the TMC where policy is researched, made and applied. We also had our first student complete the entire Health Policy Pathway and we anticipate 25 students will graduate from the program over the next two years.

24 students completed the Ethics Pathway

When clinical core rotations were suspended in April/May 2020 due to COVID-19, we responded to the increased demand for our pathway courses by altering course dates/lengths and provided an opportunity for pathway students to participate in COVID-19-related research.

GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION:

We successfully launched our updated GME **Ethics, Professionalism, and Policy (EP3)** curriculum to all 1,500 residents at Baylor.

CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION:

We expanded our CME offerings through **online opportunities** for training. This included repurposing some of the EP3 content for online use, recording our grand rounds series and exploring other options for online content. In 2021 we plan to offer **Grand Rounds** on topics such as the ethics of the COVID-19 vaccine, diversity and healthcare professional representation, patient ambivalence, human trafficking, declaration of death, interfaith perspectives on organ donation, ageism and discrimination. Check out our **website** for more information, updated regularly as we confirm speakers and other details.



FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS: We have expanded our fellowship program to include both **clinical ethics fellows** and research fellows. We currently have four clinical ethics fellows, who are in a two-year program, and two research fellows.

FACULTY PROMOTIONS:

In recognition of substantial contributions that have had a significant impact in teaching, research and scholarship Jennifer Blumenthal-Barby, Ph.D., M.A., and Mary Anderlik Majumder, J.D., Ph.D. were promoted to the rank of Professor.



JENNIFER BLUMENTHAL-BARBY, PH.D., M.A., Cullen Professor of Medical Ethics, Center Associate Director



MARY ANDERLIK MAJUMDER, J.D., PH.D., Professor

CLINICAL ETHICS INTENSIVE:

The Center partners with Houston Methodist to offer an advanced bioethics course specifically designed for all types of healthcare professionals who are involved with or interested in the resolution of complex ethical challenges.

Participate virtually on  **April 12-16, 2021**
[Learn more here.](#) 



Bioethics Intensive, April 2019

EXPANDING OUR FOOTPRINT THROUGH A NEW COLLABORATION

Did you know Texas A&M University launched Engineering Medicine (EnMed), an innovative Engineering Medicine program option, developed as a collaboration between the Texas A&M Colleges of Engineering and Medicine and Houston Methodist Hospital? It intends to educate “a new kind of physician” who will create transformational technology for healthcare. Several of our faculty now have appointments with the university and are helping to launch their Humanities, Ethics, Arts, and Law (HEAL) curriculum. We are developing a teaching plan for future courses and providing feedback to the existing curriculum for future improvements. We are excited to bring our ideas to this unique, entrepreneurial group of future doctors.



DEEPENING OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We value creating a meaningful connection between the work we do and the people whose lives are impacted by important ethical questions. We are committed to building relationships with the community (both within Baylor and TMC) and beyond — starting a dialogue around these very issues. We know we must be champions for the ideas we care about and a connector within our walls and beyond. We want to make sure everyone feels included and empowered to make positive changes.

KEY INITIATIVES INCLUDE



POSITION STATEMENTS



ANTI-RACISM RFA AND JOURNAL CLUB



MEDIA OUTREACH



SOCIAL MEDIA & BLOGGING



EVENTS



GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

Baylor College of Medicine Position Statements: We developed three position statements and a legislative briefing on important health policy topics as requested by College leadership and the Board of Trustees. We take great pride in leading these efforts — identifying thought-leaders throughout the college who are working on these issues and crafting language that is understandable and useful for a broad audience.



- Strengthening Our Commitment to Racial Justice to Improve Public Health



- Baylor College of Medicine Calls for More Accountability & New Strategies to Improve Organ Donation Policy

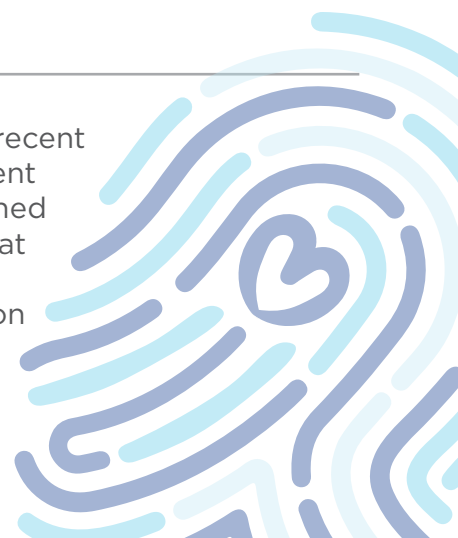


- Baylor College of Medicine Supports Comprehensive Research, Training, and Advocacy to Address Firearm Safety



- Making Healthcare More Accessible & Affordable in the U.S.

Anti-Racism RFA and Journal Club: We helped develop and oversee the recent request for applications for seed funding through the Office of the President to support research on health disparities and health equity. We also launched a journal club that critically reviews academic and multimedia materials that address the impact of social determinants of health (SDOH) on medical outcomes and quality of life. We also launched a **new blog series**, hosted on our existing blog, PolicyWise, that will give a quick rundown of the topics discussed at each journal club meeting.



Media Outreach: We continue to work to raise the visibility of Baylor as a national leader in health policy and medical ethics through media engagements and were featured in national and local media outlets, such as:

- **Houston Chronicle** Some Houston restaurants won't say if their employees have COVID-19. And they don't have to.
- **NBC News** They lied to us: Mom says police deceived her to get her DNA and charge her son with murder
- **The New Yorker** The Rogue Experimenters
- **NPR** Planning For End-Of-Life Care Is More Crucial Than Ever. Here's How
- **TMC News** Gilead sets price for COVID-19 drug remdesivir
- **Wired** In Crowded Hospitals, Who Will Get Life-Saving Equipment?

Events:

We held our **second annual health policy research day**, featuring

| SPEAKERS | TOPICS |
|---|---|
| <p>20 <i>Baylor Faculty</i></p> <p>2 <i>State Representatives:</i> State Representative Sarah Davis, JD State Senator Carol Alvarado, MBA</p> <p>1 <i>Keynote</i> from Princeton's Keith A Wailoo, Ph.D.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-tech healthcare • Protecting privacy • The politics of pain and the opioid crisis • Case Study: COVID-19 • The role of healthcare providers in policy and advocacy • Advocating for change; real-life examples from 2 Texas State legislators • Case Study: #ThisIsOurLane |
| ATTENDEES | |
| 220 <i>virtual logins</i> | |

Stay tuned for details on our next annual event in May 2021.

- This summer, Amy McGuire, J.D., Ph.D., **participated in The Wall Street Journal's Tech Health**, a virtual interactive conference of executives and experts about technologies fueling the response to the coronavirus pandemic, as well as future challenges and opportunities as companies large and small push for solutions.
- We were **accepted to host a TEDx event** scheduled for fall 2021 (details forthcoming). This event aims to be a catalyst for positive change, opening minds with inspiring ideas on issues that matter to our community. TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At our TEDxBaylorCollegeofMedicine event, TEDTalks video and live speakers will combine to spark deep discussion and connection in a small group that will be available broadly after the event.
- We continue to **bring TMC people from diverse disciplines together through our Narrative Medicine**. We collaborated with the Health Museum, Rice Medical Humanities, the McGovern Center for Ethics and Humanities, the Office of Professionalism at Baylor and Texas Women's University to host a speaking event (postponed due to the pandemic.) We held *Off-Script Stories from the Heart of Medicine*, our first virtual storytelling hour. We will sponsor two online writing workshops this winter for Harris Health employees, Baylor and UT medical staff. Look for future events dedicated to exploring the importance of story and using narratives to approach, analyze, communicate and empathize with patients.

Social Media & Blogging:

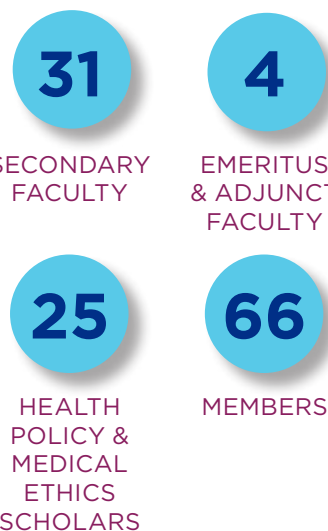
We continue to grow our social media (more than **2,200 followers**) and blog following. Our blog, **PolicyWise** features posts from faculty, students, trainees and staff at Baylor, with most posts garnering thousands of views on the Baylor Blog Network.



Growing our Community:

We continue to identify additional scholars throughout Baylor and across the TMC to collaborate with and grow our network.

We currently have:



all of whom are actively engaged in medical ethics and/or health policy work in connection with Baylor.

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JOIN US!

DONATE

Help support our mission of conducting innovative multidisciplinary research on ethical issues arising in clinical practice and biomedical research. This research informs the education of trainees at all levels and contributes to the development of health policy at the local, national, and international levels. If you're interested in learning more, [click here](#) or please contact the Office of Institutional Advancement and Alumni Relations at [713.798.4714](tel:713.798.4714).

CONNECT & GET INVOLVED

Follow us on Twitter [@BCMethics](#), like us on [Facebook](#) and read our [Blog](#). Check out our upcoming events. [Subscribe to our mailing list](#) to stay updated on the latest developments.

