



**June
2021
News**

Send news to include in the next edition to bioethics@pitt.edu.

THE CENTER EXPANDS...: The Center is pleased to welcome **Michael Deem** to the University of Pittsburgh as a Center faculty member with an appointment as Associate Professor in the Department of Human Genetics. Michael earned his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Notre Dame with a dissertation at the intersection of moral philosophy and philosophy of biology. Thereafter, he completed a one-year Fellowship in Pediatric Ethics and Genomics at Children’s Mercy Hospitals and Clinics in Kansas City. With that experience he has taught in genetic counseling programs, as well as most recently in the Duquesne University School of Nursing, including its doctoral program in nursing ethics.

Michael has three books forthcoming in the next two years: his monograph *Conceptual Issues in Genomic Medicine* (Cambridge); *Nursing Ethics: Normative Foundations, Advanced Concepts, and Emerging Issues* (Oxford), co-edited with Center faculty member **Jennifer Lingler**; and *The Oxford Handbook of Genetic Counseling* (Oxford), co-edited with affiliated faculty member **Robin Grubs** and Emily Farrow. He is also collaborating on empirical research projects and proposals to study ethics and anti-bias education in BSN Programs; COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in pediatric and prenatal settings (in development with Pitt faculty member John Maier in Family Medicine and Bioinformatics); and outcomes of naloxone distribution programs in Pennsylvania and Ohio (with Pitt and University of Cincinnati faculty and members of the Allegheny County Health Department). Michael will play an integral role in developing interprofessional ethics education in Pitt’s Schools of Health Sciences, and will teach in the Master of Arts Program in Bioethics and Pitt’s genetic counseling and MPH genetics programs.

... EXPANDS ITS REACH ACROSS CAMPUS...: During the past year, the Center supported faculty projects on disability studies and literature (with the Department of English), ethics of working with nonhuman animals to promote human health (with the School of Social Work), health humanities in the Francophone Sphere (with French & Italian), history of medicine (CF Reynolds Society), justice in housing and health (with Sociology), and memorializing lives lost to police violence (the “Say Her Name” Memorial Gown Project, with the Department of Theater Arts). It supported student presentations of creative nonfiction writing on cognitive difference and student participation in ten virtual bioethics conferences, and co-sponsored the Center for Global Health Case Competition, Pittsburgh Innovation Case Competition, and Pre-health Profession Student Summit. The Center also co-sponsored bioethics lectures in six health sciences departments, as well as three reading groups on gender and science, social justice and technology, and neuroethics.

...AND ACHIEVES GLOBAL REACH: The Center has embarked on a co-programming collaboration with the City of Asylum. Its first co-sponsored virtual event—Coral Bracho’s reading from *It Must Be a Misunderstanding* on her mother’s experience with Alzheimer’s disease—attracted an audience of 190 viewers from across the US, Europe, and Vietnam. For

Art's Work in the Age of Biotechnology there were 250 reservations for related ticketed programming from across four time zones, including Europe. The virtual exhibition itself received 1035 unique viewers. The continuing exhibition has attracted 75 viewers through Internet searches, as well as responses from the curators' marketing efforts.

HEALTH LAW ACCOLADES: Our health law faculty should take particular pride in the fact that the Health Law program was the most highly ranked program within Pitt Law in the *US News & World Report* [rankings of graduate programs](#).

FROM ADVERSITY, ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVE: When former affiliated faculty member **Bill Gardner** was diagnosed with cancer during the current pandemic, he decided to write about his experience. As a psychologist, a health services researcher, and a widely-read, deeply humane person, Bill is writing a blog, *Cancer Journal*, that includes many bioethics-relevant insights. He illustrates his narrative with art, photos, and the occasional decision tree. He refers to literature ranging from Alan Furst's *The Polish Officer* to Master Dogen in the *Genjokoan*, to Derek Parfit's *Reasons and Persons*. He comments on a range of questions about COVID, cancer, "health," the Canadian healthcare system, and medical decision-making. He does what too often bioethics doesn't do: he offers some advice. He reflects on the role of religious beliefs, people we love, and the love of a good dog when "living with" cancer. He also wants his blog to be widely read. It is available [here](#), and is included on the Center's [COVID-19 Narratives page](#).

CENTER FACULTY:

Robert Arnold published three papers with co-authors including Center faculty **Margaret Rosenzweig**, **Yael Schenker**, and **Doug White**:

- Erncoff NC, Bilderback A, Bellon J, Arnold RM, Boninger M, Kavalieratos D. Associations Between Reason for Inpatient Palliative Care Consultation, Timing, and Cost Savings. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*.
- Cohen MG, Althouse AD, Arnold RM, Bulls HW, White DB, Chu E, Rosenzweig M, Smith K, Schenker Y. Is Advance Care Planning Associated with Decreased Hope in Advanced Cancer? *JCO Oncology Practice*.
- King C, Arnold RM, Dao E, et al. [Consensus-based Approaches to Managing Opioids, including Opioid Misuse and Addiction, for Patients with Serious Illness: Protocol for a Modified Delphi Process to Generate Guidance](#). *BMJ Open*.

Mary Crossley and **Danielle Wenner** participated in a panel discussion, *How Does Global Vaccine Injustice Affect Health in Pittsburgh?* in advance of the World Trade Organization's May 5 discussion of patent protections applying to COVID-19 vaccines.

Michael Deem delivered the Darwin Keynote presentation *Disability Bias, Genomic Sequencing, and Listing Decisions in Pediatric Transplantation: What Early Case Reports Can Teach Us* for the Department of Biology and Genetic Counseling Program at Indiana State University on April 27. On June 1, he was interviewed on [WESA/NPR](#) regarding a proposed State Senate bill that would allow teens to bypass parental approval for COVID-19 vaccination.

Greer Donley presented *Contraceptive Equity: Curing the Sex Discrimination in the ACA's Mandate* at Pace University Elisabeth Haub School of Law as the recipient of the Women, Gender & the Law Emerging Scholar Award. Greer was also voted by the Pitt Law class of 2021 to receive the Robert T. Harper Excellence in Teaching Award.

Marielle Gross, with co-authors Amelia Hood and Bethany Corbin, published [Pay No Attention to That Man Behind the Curtain: An Ethical Analysis of the Monetization of Menstruation App Data](#) in the April issue of *International Journal of Feminist Approaches to Bioethics*. She also had three presentations accepted by the program committee of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities for its annual meeting in October: *Structural Injustice in the Electronic Medical Record for Women's Reproductive Health* (with Sarah Bennett), *The Immortal Life of Us: Mapping Intersecting Obligations in Learning from Care* (with Amelia Hood), and *Birth at the Crossroads: Revisiting Ethics of Home Birth* (with Paige Anderson).

Emily Herrington published a blog post [Sensational Surgery: What does 'success' look like after face and double hand transplant?](#) on April 14 for [AboutFace](#), a project based in the Department of History at the University of York that explores the meanings of face transplantation as surgical and psychological processes.

Alex London presented *Ethics in Medical AI: Accountability Without Explainability?* As the closing keynote lecture at the Lorentz Center conference on Explainable Medical AI: Ethics, Epistemology and Formal Methods on April 12.

Ruth Macklin chaired the April 29 webinar [Mandating Covid-19 Vaccination Certificates and Passports: Benefits, Risks, and Challenges](#) sponsored by The Brocher Foundation in Switzerland. Ruth also co-edited the April 21, 2021 issue of the [Indian Journal of Medical Ethics](#), which includes a series of articles on the ethics of COVID-19 vaccine research.

Alan Meisel addressed misconceptions regarding privacy regarding COVID-19 vaccination status in [Fact Check: Business can legally ask if patrons have been vaccinated—HIPAA does not apply](#), in *USA Today*, May 19.

Lisa Parker was appointed to the steering committee for the Provost's Year of Data and Society Steering Committee, chaired by **Eleanor (Nora) Mattern**, who led the Social Justice and Tech Reading Group this past year with co-sponsorship by the Center. On May 28, she participated in a virtual symposium, ["Do genetic findings have an impact on perceptions of responsibility?"](#) sponsored by the Center for Research on Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications of Psychiatric, Neurologic & Behavioral Genetics at Columbia, in collaboration with The Hastings Center. In addition, [Integrating Precision Medicine & Genomics @PittMED](#) was one of the top ten ideas in the School of Medicine's Curriculum Reform Idea Competition. It was proposed by Phil Empey and Mylynda Massart from the Institute for Precision Medicine, with whom Lisa is collaborating on *Precision Medicine Implementation / Test2Learn*, funded by the RK Mellon Foundation, together with recent Pitt Med graduate Megan Raymond, with whom Lisa has a forthcoming paper in *Public Health Genomics*.

Peter Trachtenberg is currently working on *The Last Artists in New York*, a book of nonfiction that will be published by Black Sparrow in 2023. His photo essay "Travel Documents" will appear in the summer issue of *Virginia Quarterly Review*.

Mark Wicclair presented *Allocating Ventilators During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Conscientious Objection* at the University of Otago Bioethics Centre, Dunedin, New Zealand in May. This spring he also taught *Topics in Medical Ethics* for the Pitt Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Doug White was quoted by Paula Span in “[I Need to Know I Tried](#),” a *New York Times* article discussing how time-limited trials can help families make difficult decisions in the ICU.

Daniel Wilkenfeld, with co-authors Staci Orbell and **Jennifer Lingler**, published “Ethical Considerations in Communicating Alzheimer's Disease Neuroimaging Biomarker Test Results to Symptomatic Individuals” in *Neurotherapeutics* in April.

MA PROGRAM STUDENTS AND ALUMNI:

Recent program graduate **Natalia Acevedo** has accepted a position as a full-time consultant for the Healthy Families Initiative at the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University.

Michael Certo's proposal, *Capability Theory as a Framework for Ethical Quality of Life Assessment in Life-Sustaining Treatment Decisions for Children* was accepted as a paper presentation at the 2021 American Society for Bioethics and Humanities annual meeting in October.

Though not a graduate of the Bioethics Program, author **Rebecca Skloot** studied bioethics with Center faculty while earning her MFA at Pitt and credits them in her No. 1 *New York Times* bestseller, *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. She received an [honorary doctorate](#) during Pitt's spring commencement.

The paper proposal, *Calculated Trust in the VBAC: Challenging Reliance on Quantitative Clinical Algorithms*, which **Joie Zabec** submitted with Laura Specker Sullivan and **Marielle Gross**, was accepted for presentation at the ASBH Conference, which Joie will attend as a student of the Medical University of South Carolina. With **Natalia Acevedo**, she is also participating in a panel, *No Mas Bebes: The Ethics of Eugenics Programs and Reproductive Justice in Latinx Communities*.