

## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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**Dear Readers:**

It is a privilege to present to the subscribers and readers of the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* this Special Supplement. It reflects THE PROCEEDINGS of *The Public's Health and the Law in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Third Annual Partnership Conference on Public Health Law* which was held in Atlanta, Georgia, on June 14–16, 2004. The American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sponsored the conference. In addition, the conference planning committee (see Appendix A) and the many collaborating organizations (see Appendix B) were critical to the success of this conference. We thank you all.

More than 600 people participated in this third annual conference. They came from all fifty states and from Canada, the Czech Republic, Japan, and Korea. The attendees included: federal, state and local public health leaders and practitioners; elected and appointed public policy makers; law enforcement officials; members of the judiciary; physicians and attorneys working in public health; and, researchers and educators in public health law as well as students from law schools and schools of public health around the country.

The primary goals of the conference were fourfold: (1) to highlight the critical role law plays in protecting the health of the public and in public health emergency preparedness; (2) to explore new perspectives on the intersection of public health and law; (3) to present scientific information relevant to public health lawmakers and practitioners; and, (4) to stimulate formation of partnerships to shape and to use legal tools for improved public health.

THE PROCEEDINGS capture both the spirit and the substance of the conference. The papers from the plenary sessions are presented in the first section. The plenary speakers explored issues that are both cross-cutting and central to all those who shape, implement, and interpret public health laws and policies. Following the plenary papers are summaries of the concurrent sessions. These sessions addressed important issues of public health law gathered under five topical headings: using law for community health; forging community legal partnerships; applying law to front-burner issues; building emergency legal preparedness; and, strengthening science and skills.

THE PROCEEDINGS do not include the workshops and short courses presented on June 14, the first day of the conference. Selected materials from those sessions will be accessible on the archived conference website at <<http://www.aslme.org>>.

THE PROCEEDINGS would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of many individuals. In particular, I would like to thank Benjamin Moulton, Executive Director of the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics, and Edward J. Hutchinson, Editor and Director of Publications, *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*. At the CDC, I thank Richard A. Goodman, Anthony D. Moulton, Montrece M. Ransom, and Frederic Shaw of the Public Health Law Program, and the entire CDC Public Health Law Team. In addition, I would like to

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thank each conference presenter who made the commitment to share her or his expertise with those attending the conference and with the readers of THE PROCEEDINGS. Special thanks go to the Healthcare Georgia Foundation which sponsored the first annual Gene Matthews Public Health Law Lecture at the 2004 conference. This will be a prominent feature of future conferences in this series.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the fine work and significant contribution made to THE PROCEEDINGS by the law student interns and fellows, as well as the volunteers from the CDC, who served as the Writers/Editors of the sessions. It has been a pleasure to work with them. They are:

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Special thanks to all of them for their dedication and commitment to the successful conclusion of this project.

Sincerely,  
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