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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**A**s I finish my second decade as the editor of the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, it is sometimes hard to remember I once led a very different academic life. A long time ago I was a student studying for a Ph.D. in 19th-century American history, with an abiding interest in the Civil War and the way it was remembered and commemorated. I recall being struck even then by how difficult it was for even some of the great heroes of the Union to receive the appropriate pension benefits related to their wartime wounds and injuries. Unless one had an extremely visible injury or amputation, it seemed, one was never above the suspicion of trying to defraud their government, no matter how nobly that person defended it during the war.

Because of this interest I was excited to learn my friend Daniel Goldberg and a group of his acclaimed colleagues were conducting a study on the concepts of malingering and social policy throughout American history. We quickly came to an agreement to publish the papers coming out of this study in the pages of *JLME*, and the results are the issue you now hold in your hands, featuring the symposium “Malingering and Health Policy,” guest-edited by Daniel and spotlighting a stellar group of interdisciplinary scholars. This team explores the theme of malingering from its inception at the very beginning of literature through its blossoming in Victorian England and 19th century America, as both nations begin to build the social safety nets of the modern state. The authors continue the story into the 20th and 21st centuries, with thoughtful explorations of war, sport, welfare, Medicaid, and even how the concepts of malingering and deceit inform our response to COVID-19. And recall how I was struck twenty years ago by the difficulty of white soldiers and officers receiving proper pensions after the Civil War? A recurring theme of this collection is that if this group often had to fight accusations of malingering, the challenge was tenfold for women and racial minorities, a challenge that certainly persists today.

Containing in addition to this symposium our usual collection of independent articles, commentaries, and columns, (many of which continue to explore the continual challenges COVID is inflicting upon all of us) we are deeply proud of this issue of *JLME*. And reflecting the importance of the subject matter, we are very pleased to announce that the symposium papers in this issue will be free and open-access to everyone. We hope you all share this important work widely. And as always, we thank you for reading our journal.

Ted Hutchinson  
Editor  
*JLME*