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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

**A**s we all know, one of the central questions in bioethics surround the protections afforded patients and research subjects. What is informed consent? How does one grant it? How does one approach the challenge of those not deemed competent to grant consent? The questions go on and on. But in no field are the ethical demands more challenging and thought-provoking than in the area of pediatric care and research. With children, the urgency of these questions only multiplies as their surrogates, parents, and protectors simply want what is in the best interest of the child.

This symposium issue of the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics* faces many aspects of those questions head-on. As expected, guest editor Bob Sade, and old friend of *JLME* and a long-time symposium editor, brings his usual roster of great authors and unique style to the pages of our journal for the symposium, "Ethical and Legal Issues in Pediatrics." In its pages, Sade and his authors employ a unique format where two authors debate a current hot-button issue in the area of pediatric ethics. One set of authors debate whether screening of newborns for disorders with high benefit-risk ratios should be mandatory, or if it should instead require informed consent. Another set tackles the morality and even the legality of newborn male circumcision. A third examines whether infants with trisomy 18 should undergo open-heart surgery. Finally, Stan Block and Doug Diekema also debated refusal of vaccinations among children in an earlier issue (*JLME* 43-3); those articles will be included with the ones found in this issue in our online edition, available at [aslme.org](http://aslme.org). Together, the collection suggests that these questions rooted in bioethics only become more profound and urgent when they affect the youngest and most vulnerable in our care.

This issue also contains, as usual, a fine collection of independent articles (including one more look at global biobanks, in a continuation of last issue) and our two most popular *JLME* columns, "Currents in Contemporary Bioethics," edited by Mark Rothstein, and "Public Health and the Law," edited by James G. Hodge, Jr. These consistently popular features of *JLME* will continue to examine the latest issues in health law. In this issue CCB looks at the "end" of the HIPAA Privacy Rule, while PHL examines the role of taxation of the sugar-sweetened beverage industry as a means of reducing obesity. We hope you enjoy these columns, and the whole issue, as much as we did.

Ted Hutchinson  
Editor  
*JLME*