# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

#### **Dear Readers:**

It is my pleasure to present this Special Supplement to the *Journal of Law*, *Medicine & Ethics*, THE PROCEEDINGS of The Public's Health and the Law in the 21st Century: Fifth Annual Partnership Conference held in Atlanta, Georgia on June 12-14, 2006. The conference was co-sponsored by the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Law Program. The conference planning committee (see Appendix A) and the many collaborating organizations (see Appendix B) were critical to this year's event. I would like to extend our sincere appreciation for their invaluable contributions to the conference and to improved public health through law.

The goal of this conference is to improve the understanding of law as a public health tool. By taking part in the annual conferences, participants are better able: (1) to explain the critical role law plays in protecting the health of the public and in strengthening the public health system; (2) to describe practical approaches to applying legal tools to today's top-priority public health issues; (3) to identify and assess scientific and other evidence for effective, law-based public health strategies; and, (4) to build partnerships with colleagues across professional boundaries.

More than 650 people participated in this fifth annual conference. Attendees came from all fifty states, Canada, Japan, and Israel and included: federal, state, and local public health leaders, practitioners, and legal counsel; elected and appointed public policy makers; physicians and nurses in public health and clinical practice; emergency management and law enforcement officials; judges and attorneys active in public health and healthcare; educators and researchers in public health law; as well as students from law schools and schools of public health around the country.

THE PROCEEDINGS capture both the spirit and substance of the conference. In the first section, keynote speakers discuss significant public health and legal issues that are both cross-cutting and central to the practice of public health law. Following the plenary speakers is an article capturing the special symposium on due process in public health. Immediately following are concurrent session summaries organized around five topical tracks including: all-hazards emergency legal preparedness; law for healthy homes, schools, and communities; law for healthy people; partners in public health; and, new tools in public health law and ethics.

THE PROCEEDINGS were made possible by the valuable contributions of many dedicated individuals. In particular, I would like to thank Benjamin Moulton, Executive Director of the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics, and Edward J. Hutchison, Editor and Director of Publications, Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics. Additionally, I would like to thank Anthony D. Moulton and Richard A. Goodman, Co-Directors of the CDC Public Health Law Program, as well as the Public Health Law Program team. Furthermore, I would like to thank all members of the conference faculty for making the commitment to share their expertise and insight with conference participants and with the readers of THE PROCEEDINGS.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the fine work and significant contributions made to THE PROCEEDINGS by the students and volunteers, from inside the CDC and outside, who served as Writer/ Editors of the conference sessions. It has been my pleasure to work with them. They are:

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Special thanks to all who helped make this year's conference another milestone in public health law and practice.

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