

Baylor  
College of  
Medicine

CENTER FOR  
MEDICAL ETHICS  
& HEALTH POLICY

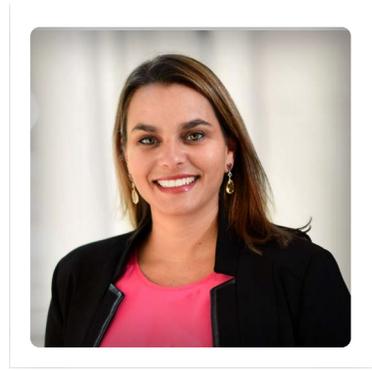


# THE POWER OF PASSIONATE PEOPLE

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER:

### LETTER FROM DR. MCGUIRE



A lot has happened this year in the world. And we know 2024 is going to present additional challenges with elections and continued geo-political issues. People are sad and angry, and it is more important than ever that we stand together in our condemnation of hate, our celebration of compassion and hope, and our support for one another as humans.

As I reflect on our Center's role and focus this year, I recognize, perhaps more than ever, that the magic of what we do doesn't come simply from our quantifiable outputs (i.e., the number of grants we receive or articles we publish). It comes from our people - the passion, relationships, creative thinking, and diversity that are the source of energy and success of our Center.

To that end, I am excited to share with you this glimpse into who we are and what we do. I encourage you to [watch our new video](#) to get a first-hand look at what we are about. Please delve into this report to discover our commitments, as well as the achievements and impact we have made together this year, in our community and beyond.

Thank you to those who have supported us and dedicated their time, talent, and financial resources to uphold our mission. Our success has been made possible by your loyal and generous contributions and collaborations. Together we are focused on making healthcare more ethical, transparent, and diverse.

We know there is a lot of work to do, and we are eager to help bring about change in the year ahead. Best wishes this holiday season and a happy and healthy 2024!

With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy McGuire".

Amy McGuire

# THE CENTER FOR MEDICAL ETHICS & HEALTH POLICY

## 2023 COMMITMENTS

**1** We are committed to teaching ethics and policy — reaching more people, with more resources, in more ways.

### STUDENTS

#### Medical Students:

In 2023, we worked with Baylor leaders to revamp the medical school curriculum, integrating medical ethics throughout and making it an essential part of the learning experience.



### STUDENT PARTICIPATION

100

Medical Ethics  
Pathway

98

Health Policy  
Pathway

Both pathways are constantly evolving to ensure students know how to apply ethics and policy concepts, respectively, to current problems and questions in the healthcare environment.

### ENMED



#### Engineering & Medicine

**Students:** Through the Texas A&M EnMed program, our faculty taught 150 students humanities, ethics, economics, arts and law this year. This program builds upon our clinical relationship with Houston Methodist and provides six key courses across three years of medical education.

#### EnMed Media Moment:

[Is There A Doctor On The Plane?!](#)  
*Krishna Anand responds to airline passenger in crisis.*

"He credits his hands-on experience and clinical rotations and discussing moral and ethical dilemmas in EnMed's Practice of Medicine courses for preparing him to act."

**Medical Residents & Fellows:** Our Ethics, Professionalism and Policy Program (EP3) is an innovative combination of online video modules, engagement sessions and assessments. This year, 1,000 residents participated in the program, delving into topics such as Healthcare Economics, Impaired and Disruptive Clinicians, Genetics, Conflicts of Interest and Professional Boundaries, Confidentiality and Social Media, to name a few. Check out our learning library [here](#). We also presented about our EP3 program at conferences: Association for Medical Education in Europe, the International Conference on Residency Education, Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education and the Academy for Professionalism in Health Care.



**Clinical Ethics Fellows:** In 2014, the Center developed a two-year clinical ethics fellowship program that provides comprehensive training in clinical ethics as part of the Houston-New York Clinical Ethics Consortium, which is comprised of Weill Cornell Medicine, New York-Presbyterian, Houston Methodist and Baylor.

**We have trained 15 fellows to date, all of whom successfully attained positions upon completion.**

### Current Fellows



Leon Budrie, M.D.  
MEDICINE

Entered the second year of the program



Megan Louise Kitts, Ph.D.  
PHILOSOPHY

Entered the first year of the program



Jared Nathaniel Smith, Ph.D.  
PHILOSOPHY

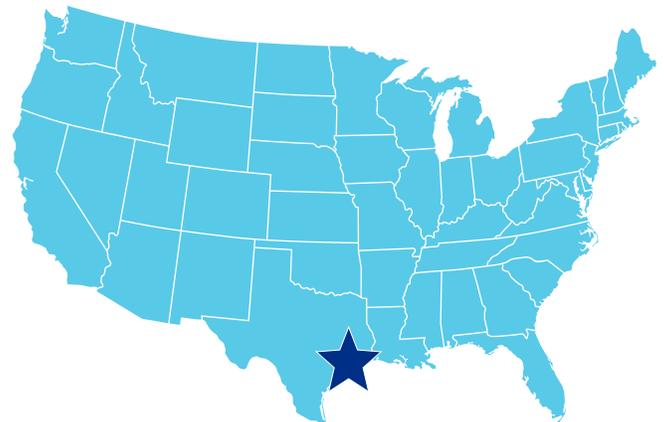
Began as a clinical ethics fellow in our Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center bioethics program



Logan Alexander Neitzke-Spruill, Ph.D.  
SOCIOLOGY

**Research Fellows:** In 2023, we launched the Ethical Legal Implications of PSYchedelics in Society (ELIPSIS) program and hired our first ELIPSIS postdoctoral fellow.

**College and Graduate Students:** 14 interns worked with us this year as part of our formal summer internship program in research and clinical ethics. These undergraduate and graduate students from institutions across the country enthusiastically joined our community, engaging in research and contributing to our shared intellectual environment.



## PROFESSIONALS & AND CONTINUOUS LEARNERS

### Physicians, Nurses, Social Workers and Other Healthcare Professionals:

*We hosted 6 virtual bioethics grand rounds, with 70-125 people registering/attending each event.*

#### These sessions covered controversial topics such as—

- Ethics and reproductive health: caring for patients after the Dobbs decision
- When patients can't consent: should families decide
- How the arts and humanities can help build trust and demonstrate compassion
- Astro-Ethics: grand ethical challenges for safeguarding human health in outer space
- Responsible pain medicine during a drug overdose epidemic
- How the health insurance industry militates against mental health

### Students, Faculty, Clinicians, Health Policy Scholars and Patient Advocates

made up our 2023 cohort of 200+ folks who attended our Health Policy Symposium on the future of medicine, covering topics such as intelligent medicine, brain computing, medicine in the metaverse, and psychedelics.



**Chaplains, Clinical Case Workers, Clinical Ethicists, Human Resources Professionals, Risk Management Professionals, Spiritual Care Workers, among others**, made up our 2023 class of 27 individuals who attended our 5-day virtual Bioethics Intensive Course on fundamental bioethics topics and advanced clinical ethics skills.



**150 Bioethics Scholars and Learners** attended our Brody Award Lecture, featuring [Emily A. Largent, JD, Ph.D., RN](#), Emanuel and Robert Hart Assistant Professor of Medical Ethics and Health Policy, Perelman School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania.

**Philosophers:** Through a grant from the Greenwall Foundation and in collaboration with partners at the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics, Georgetown's Kennedy Institute of Ethics, and NYU's Center for Bioethics, we created [The Philosophical Bioethics Hub](#), a website available to the public with Greenwall Philosophical Bioethics Seminar Series, normative-empirical bioethics toolkit, events and web-based lecture series in philosophy and bioethics.

**2** We are committed to [pursuing innovative research and scholarship](#) that our faculty are passionate about, that addresses controversy head-on, and that is solution-oriented.

### Launched the Ethical Legal Implications of Psychedelics in Society (ELIPSIS) Program

(Program Directors: Amy McGuire, J.D., Ph.D. and Lynnette Averill, Ph.D.) to conduct high-quality research and develop evidence-based guidelines to inform policy decisions about psychedelic-assisted therapy.



This program, supported through philanthropic funding from the Ortus Foundation and an anonymous donor, has:

- Wrote an influential piece in *Science* on “[Pressing regulatory challenges for psychedelic medicine](#),” which garnered additional media attention in NPR’s [On Point](#) and [WIRED](#).
- Spearheaded a meeting at the [Banbury Center at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory](#) of worldwide experts to develop an ethical framework for psychedelic medicine.
- Began an analysis of the current state of unregulated psychedelic retreats that are advertised in the U.S., and the ethical, legal and social implications of these programs from the perspective of those participating in them.
- Hired a postdoc, research coordinator, summer intern, and several student helpers to support the work and in service to our mission to train the next generation of scholars.

**Broadened our research and collaboration** with Baylor Departments of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Molecular and Human Genetics, Neurosurgery, and Molecular Virology and Microbiology, as well as the Human Sequencing Center and the Center for Space Medicine. Below are a few key new grants:

- Advancing Maternal Health Equity among Black Women in the United States: Considerations for Bioethicists (Faith Fletcher, Ph.D., Greenwall Foundation)
- Implementation of an Impact Assessment Tool to Optimize Responsible Stewardship of Genomic Data in the Cloud
- Informational Needs and Attitudes toward Pharmacogenomic Testing Among Ethnically Diverse Parents of Pediatric Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia Patients (Stacey Pereira, Ph.D., P20 Developmental Research Program/National Cancer Institute)
- Wastewater Sampling: A New Tool to Accelerate Ending the HIV Epidemic (Faith Fletcher, Ph.D., National Institute on Drug Abuse)
- AI-Assisted Microendoscopy for The Early Detection of Esophageal Cancer (Kristin Kostick-Quenet, Ph.D. and Amy McGuire, Ph.D., National Cancer Institute)
- A Case Study on Autism in Data Sharing Practices Philosophical Bioethics Seminar Series (Jennifer Blumenthal-Barby, Ph.D., Greenwall Foundation)

**Launched an Astro Ethics Program** (Program Director: Vasiliki Rahimzadeh, Ph.D.) with funding from the Translational Research Institute for Space Health (TRISH).



As part of this, we:

- Convened a group of space research industry leaders, medical ethicists and policy experts, along with representatives from academia, government, and spaceflight companies at [the Banbury Center of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory](#) to develop an ethical framework for human research in private spaceflight.
- Published a paper in *Science* titled “[Ethically cleared to launch?](#)” which outlined potential ethical concerns facing the future of commercial space research and provided guiding principles on how to make research increasingly safe and inclusive.
- Launched a new Astro Ethics Affinity Group for the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH).

Published our perspective and research in high-impact journals acting as change agents, spotlighting issues and enabling ongoing transformation. In 2023, we published 50+ articles, some highlights include:

***American Journal  
of Bioethics***

- [The End of Personhood](#)
- [Rethinking the Moral Authority of Experience: Critical Insights and Reflections from Black Women Scholars](#)
- [The Need for Diverse Empirical Data to Inform the Use of Polygenic Risk Scores in Prenatal Screening](#)
- [Ethical, Legal, and Social Implications of Genomics Research: Implications for Building a More Racially Diverse Bioethics Workforce](#)
- [Ethics Education for Healthcare Professionals in the Era of chatGPT and Other Large Language Models: Do We Still Need It?](#)

***Frontier in  
Big Data***

- [Fresh takes on five health data sharing domains: Quality, privacy, equity, incentives, and sustainability](#)

***Nature Machine  
Intelligence***

- [Ethical hazards of health data governance in the metaverse](#)

***JAMA Internal  
Medicine***

- [US Medical Student Health Insurance Coverage for Mental Health Treatment After the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

***Journal of  
Medical Ethics***

- [Reconsidering risk attitudes: why higher-order attitudes hinder medical decision-making](#)

***Neuron***

- [Benefits of sharing neurophysiology data from the BRAIN Initiative Research Opportunities in Humans Consortium](#)

### 3 We are committed to helping solve complex ethical issues and [making healthcare more ethical at the bedside.](#)

#### Broadened the reach and impact of our clinical ethics support:



We continue to grow our ethics consult service and look for new opportunities to integrate and add ethics tools and resources for our hospital partners.



We continue to be instrumentally involved in the ethics committees at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center (BSLMC), Ben Taub Hospital, Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center and on several committees at Houston Methodist Hospital (HMH): biomedical ethics committee, biomedical ethics council, critical care management performance improvement committee, ECMO care management performance improvement committee and medical review board for heart transplantation, device placement, and lung transplantation. Additionally, we are involved in Baylor College of Medicine institutional review board.



New this year, at BSLMC (Program Director: Claire Horner, J.D.) we increased integration of this service in ICU rounds, critical care, palliative care and in nursing. We worked on six hospital policy updates on topics including code status, medical decision-making, end-of-life decision-making, informed consent, advanced directive, do not attempt resuscitation (DNAR) algorithms and chaplain consent guidelines. We also added clinical perspective to an advance communication workshop for physicians and into the nurse residency program across the Texas division.



At HMH, (Program Director: Trevor Bibler, Ph.D.) in 2023, we developed a memo on normothermic regional perfusion and revised several other policies (inpatient do not resuscitation [DNR], intractable conflict, surrogate decision-making and advanced directive) and held 10 education sessions on these changes.

#### Communicated our clinical ethics insights through 20+ impactful publications, aiming to raise awareness and drive positive change toward a more ethical healthcare landscape, some examples include:

##### ***American Journal of Bioethics***

- [Protecting Life and Ensuring Death—Confounding the Dead Donor Rule](#)

##### ***Annals of Internal Medicine***

- [Voices Behind Bars: Ethical, Legal, and Practical Considerations for Surrogates Who Are Incarcerated](#)

##### ***The Journal of Heart and Lung Transplantation***

- [Withdrawing Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation \(ECMO\) Against a Family's Wishes: Three Permissible Scenarios](#)

##### ***Health Care Analysis***

- [Uninformed Origins: Should We Be Advising Parents on the Source of Medicines and Therapies?](#)

##### ***Journal of Clinical Ethics***

- [An Open Discussion of the Impact of Open Notes on Clinical Ethics: A Justification for Harm-Based Exclusions from Clinical Ethics Documentation](#)

##### ***JACC Heart Failure***

- [Pregnancy in Patients With Advanced Heart Failure: Impact of Overturn of Roe v Wade Ruling](#)
- [Deactivation of Left Ventricular Assist Devices at the End of Life: Narrative Review and Ethical Framework](#)

**Hired three new faculty members** who will also conduct clinical ethics consultations:



[Holland Kaplan, M.D.](#), Assistant professor and clinical ethics consultant at Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center. She completed our clinical ethics fellowship and before that, as a medical student, also completed our medical ethics pathway. She also completed her residency at Baylor. She is interested in academic hospital medicine, medical education medical decision-making, medicine after the Holocaust, narrative medicine and professional identity formation.



[Ryan Dougherty, Ph.D., MSW.](#), Assistant professor and clinical ethics consultant at Houston Methodist Hospital. He completed his fellowship in clinical ethics at Cornell Weill Medical College. His research focuses on bolstering patient-centered care through a social justice lens.



[Joanna Smolenski, Ph.D.](#), Assistant professor and clinical ethics consultant at Houston Methodist Hospital. She completed her clinical ethics fellowship at the UCLA Health Ethics Center. Her research focuses on ethics, applied ethics (especially bioethics), and moral psychology.

**4** We are committed to [supporting and growing our community](#) and [leveraging our expertise](#) to maximize impact.

**Mary Majumder, J.D., Ph.D., receives the Dalton Tomlin Chair in Medical Ethics and Health Policy:** [Dr. Mary Majumder](#), a renowned scholar, educator, mentor, and colleague, will take over this chair from Dr. Chris Scott when he retires at the end of the year. In this role she will continue her research on data sharing, new technologies, and ethical and policy issues in health care with a focus on cost, quality and access and remain the director of the Humanities, Ethics, Arts and the Law (HEAL) component of the Practice of Medicine 1 Course for the EnMed Program. She will also become director of our new Bioethics Collaboration & Outreach Program, with the goal of expanding our intellectual community, cultivating a culture of collaboration and ensuring clarity and coordination of outreach and engagement.



## Added New Scholars & Collaborators to our community:



[April Adams, M.D.](#), Assistant professor at Baylor College of Medicine in the Departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Molecular and Human Genetics. She is also the associate program director for the maternal-fetal medicine and combined maternal-fetal medicine/medical genetics fellowship programs and the maternal medical director for quality and safety at Ben Taub Hospital. Research interests: placental development, pregnancy loss, stillbirth and health disparities in reproductive genetics.



[Lynnette Astrid Averill, Ph.D.](#), Co-director of the ELIPSIS Program, clinical research psychologist, associate professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences and clinical research psychologist at Baylor College of Medicine and the Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center and an adjunct assistant professor at Yale School of Medicine and the Clinical Neuroscience Division of the VA National Center for PTSD. Research interests: psychoneurobiology of suicidality and PTSD.



[Ellen Friedman, M.D., F.A.C.S., F.A.A.P.](#), Director of the Center for Professionalism and professor of otolaryngology – head & neck surgery. Professional interests: acquired and congenital airway problems, congenital malformations of the head and neck including lymphatic malformations.



[Anne Jeffrey, Ph.D.](#), Adjunct assistant professor, School of Medicine – Temple, Baylor College of Medicine; assistant professor at Baylor University, Department of Philosophy. Research interests: the history of ethics, political and legal philosophy, bioethics, Aristotle and philosophy of religion.



[Fanny Schulte, MS, MEd, CPO, LP, FAAOP](#), Assistant professor, School of Health Professions, Orthotics and Prosthetics, Baylor College of Medicine. Research interests: healthcare ethics, clinical professional development, Research translation & communication, process improvement and quality in healthcare.



[Devan Stahl, Ph.D.](#), Adjunct associate professor, School of Medicine – Temple, Baylor College of Medicine; associate professor of religion at Baylor University. Research interests: medicine and the visual arts, theological bioethics, disability studies, beginning and end of life issues.



[Peter Ubel, M.D.](#), Madge and Dennis T. McLawhorn University Distinguished Professor at Duke University, professor of business administration, professor in the Sanford School of Public Policy, professor of medicine, professor in population health sciences, associate of the Duke Initiative for Science & Society, core faculty member, Duke-Margolis Center for Health Policy, member of the Duke Cancer Institute. Research interests: explores controversial issues about the role of values and preferences in health care decision making, from decisions at the bedside to policy decisions.

Provided critical perspective through our Policywise [blog](#), [twitter](#) and [facebook](#) and via the media to the general public:

STAT

**STAT**

[How medical schools are failing students who need mental health care](#)

Medscape

**Medscape**

[Med Students Also Plagued by High Insurance Costs for Mental Health](#)



THE HASTINGS CENTER

**Hastings Center**

[The Retrievals: Women's Vulnerability to Injury, Violence, and Pain in Health Care; and Involuntary Withdrawal: A Bridge Too Far?](#)

HOUSTON★CHRONICLE

**Houston Chronicle**

[Using genealogy sites to solve crimes could come into focus in legislative session](#)

*The Atlantic*

**The Atlantic**

[The Right to Not Have Your Mind Read](#)

HOUSTON MATTERS

**Houston Matters (NPR) -**

[Should psychedelic drugs be used to treat PTSD and depression in veterans?](#)

theSkimm'

**The Skimm**

[AI In Medicine: Can AI Help You Get Better Healthcare?](#)

KevinMD

**KevinMD**

[Accessing needed pediatric mental health care was difficult before the pandemic and is now at crisis levels](#)



**NPR**

[For many, a 'natural death' may be preferable to enduring CPR](#)

TEXAS OBSERVER

**Texas Observer**

[Abortion laws stand between pregnant Texans and the care they need](#)

**Served as leaders and active, involved members of the field:**

Recognized through awards and accolades—



**Jennifer Blumenthal-Barby, Ph.D.**

Hastings Center Fellow

*A group of more than 200 individuals of outstanding accomplishment whose work has informed scholarship and public understanding of complex ethical issues in health, health care, science and technology.*



**Savitri Fedson, M.D.**

Secretary of the Veterans Hospital Administration Coin of Recognition, Recipient, Secretary of Veterans Affairs



**Savitri Fedson, M.D. and Jennifer Blumenthal-Barby, Ph.D.**

Baylor's Women of Excellence Award



**Faith Fletcher, Ph.D.**

Greenwall Scholar to lead innovative research on maternal health equity among Black Women

Chair-Elect of the Hastings Center Council



**Trevor M. Bibler, Ph.D., Christi Guerrini, J.D., M.P.H. Janet Malek, Ph.D. and Faith Fletcher, Ph.D.**

Norton Rose Fulbright Faculty Excellence Award for teaching and evaluation (3) and education materials (1)

Our faculty, staff and pathway graduates participated in 31 different presentations/events at the American Society of Bioethics and Humanities annual conference. [Learn more.](#)



AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR  
**BIOETHICS + HUMANITIES**

## Our faculty:



**Lead and are actively involved in many advocacy groups and professional societies** such as—

- Academy for Professionalism in Health Care
- American Society of Bioethics and Humanities
- Association of Bioethics Program Directors
- Catholic Health Association
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Global Alliance for Genomics and Health
- Greenwall Foundation
- Hastings Center
- NASA Bioethics Panel
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
- National Initiative Justice
- North American Fetal Therapy Network
- The Alliance of Independent Academic Medical Centers
- Translational Research Institute for Space's EXPAND (Enhancing eXploration Platforms and Analog Definition) Program Professionalism
- Women of Color Writing Accountability Group



**Served as journal reviewers and editors**

in publications such as—

- *American Journal of Bioethics*
- *Cell*
- *Frontiers in Genomics*
- *HEC Forum*
- *JACC-Heart Failure*
- *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*
- *Nature Biotechnology*
- *Stem Cell*



**Taught classes, gave lectures, presented posters**

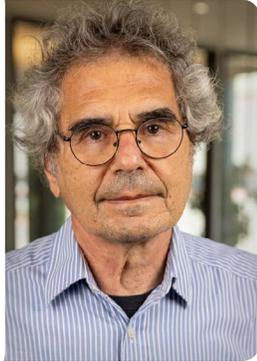
at other universities and large meetings including—

- American College of Medical Genetics and Genomics Annual Meeting
- Boston Medical Center
- Duke University
- Harvard University
- Kaiser Permanente West LA Bioethics Committee
- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
- Next-Generation Screening, The Promise and Perils of DNA Sequencing of Newborns at Birth Workshop
- National Institutes of Health Genetic Counseling Training Program
- NYU
- Society for Research in Child Development Conference
- Stanford University
- Texas A&M
- University of Chicago
- Wake Forest School of Medicine

**A look ahead:** Here's a preview of our calendar for the year ahead. Click [here](#) to stay abreast of the latest events. Registration/details for many are forthcoming.

**Feb. 26  
Noon**

**Baruch  
Brody  
Award &  
Lecture**



Recognizes an open-rank scholar who has made important theoretical contributions to the field of bioethics. Come hear from 2023-2024 awardee Dr. Daniel M. Hausman, research professor in the Center for Population-Level Bioethics (CPLB), Department of Health Behavior, Society and Policy at Rutgers University. He is also a faculty member within the Rutgers Department of Philosophy. His talk will be about “Preferences, Health, and Health Care” Learn more and register [here](#).

**April 8-12**

**Bioethics  
Intensive Course**

A five day in-person course on fundamental bioethics topics and advanced clinical ethics skills. Learn more and register [here](#).

**May 14**

**Health Policy  
Symposium**



Our **annual event** where we highlight health policy work at Baylor College of Medicine and discuss contemporary challenges in health policy that impact our community. The theme for this year's conference will be “When medicine becomes political.” We hope to have candid conversations about how to engage in productive discussion around controversial topics and promote respectful discourse in the face of disagreement. We will also have a poster session from Baylor students. Registration forthcoming.

**Ongoing Grand Rounds**

We host 6 Grand Rounds each calendar year on critical bioethics issues. Keep an eye out for more details about topics, speakers and dates.



Thank you for reading this report and being a part of our community. Your generous support and collaboration enables us to research and influence policy on today's most pressing ethical issues. Your support tells us that you believe in our mission.

## JOIN US!

- Reach out to connect, collaborate and learn more.
- Provide resources to help recruit and retain world-class faculty, expand our research and education, and establish endowments to create research programs on highly innovative bioethical issues.
- Help our faculty conduct pilot projects that enable us to respond quickly and think more expansively about controversial ethical and policy issues.
- Expand our teaching bandwidth with fellowships to attract the best students and grow our field or stipends for bioethics and clinical ethics internships.
- Support our Center's initiatives in the community.

Every gift is appreciated and will help us continue our work in 2024. [Donate now](#) or please contact [Office Advancement and Alumni Affairs](#) at ☎713.798.4714.

BCM.EDU/ETHICS

