

Indiana University Center for Bioethics

**10 YEARS**

2001 - 2011

of Tackling Tough Questions



INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
CENTER FOR BIOETHICS

# Director's Letter

# 10 YEARS

**H**as it really been ten years since we established the Indiana University Center for Bioethics in July 2001? It's been more than a decade since the human genome was sequenced; ten years since President Bush announced his embryonic stem cell research policy. It's been ten years since the attacks of 9/11, but also since Wikipedia first appeared on the internet.

**Time flies.** If you asked me then where the IU Center for Bioethics would be a decade on, my answer would've been close to where we are today. We wanted to make a tangible contribution to academic life at Indiana University, raise the public's appreciation for ethical issues in health and science, and earn a reputation as an objective resource for the State.

**We've done that.** In the immediate aftermath of the Human Genome Project the IUCB focused on the ethical, legal and social issues that arose from this new knowledge. We tackled the ethics of stem cell studies, testing children for genetic diseases, and the donation of DNA for clinical research. We published dozens of scholarly articles, obtained federal research grants, made ourselves available to the local community and partnered with local, national, and international collaborators.

But we could not have predicted the many topics that emerged that weren't part of our initial "genetic" focus. Who knew there would be an international influenza scare requiring the State Department of Health to seek our advice on how to ethically prepare? Who would've thought that a death-row inmate in northern Indiana would seek permission to donate his liver to his sister resulting in requests for ethical and legal analysis of the options? And who could've imagined that when the Indiana University-Kenya Partnership broadened their scope to include research, it would inspire us to develop a research ethics training program?

**We responded to these issues** because we had a stellar group of faculty investigators and an enthusiastic staff. But it would not have been possible without the support of many people and organizations. There would be no IUCB if not for the imagination of people like Jerry Bepko, Ora Pescovitz, Herman Saatkamp, and the late Myles Brand. The IUCB would not continue to thrive if not for the encouragement of Dean Craig Brater of the IU School of Medicine, and from the generous support of the Lilly Endowment, the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, and the Regenstrief Foundation.

**So what will the next 10 years bring?** In bioethics no two days are the same. With the growing use of electronic medical records and smart-phones it is a certainty that privacy issues will become more complex, not less. New surgical techniques, imaging technology, and the design of genetically sophisticated medicines will demand more, not less ethical attention. That said, some of our oldest problems remain unsolved. We're still debating how to provide access to basic health care for an entire nation. We remain challenged by persistent public health problems that require solutions that promote health but challenge civil liberties. We know that health and disease are not dependent solely on genes but also by our environment so we can expect to see a confluence of environmental and medical ethics. In short, over the next decade the questions will be just as tough to tackle.



Eric M. Meslin, Ph.D., *Director, IU Center for Bioethics*



# Current Programs

# 10 YEARS



## • **Predictive Health Ethics Research (PredictER)**

Funded by a grant from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, PredictER aims to build strategic bioethics research capacity to support predictive health studies in Indiana.



## • **Bioethics and Subject Advocacy Program (BSAP) Indiana CTSI**

A key component of the Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute, BSAP is working to make bioethics central to the way people think about clinical and translational research in Indiana.



## • **Indiana University-Moi University Academic Research Ethics Partnership**

An international research ethics program for curriculum development and ethics training that builds on longstanding partnerships and collaborations between Indiana and East Africa.

## • **Center for Law, Ethics, and Applied Research (CLEAR) in Health Information**

CLEAR addresses ethical, legal and social issues involved in the growing use of health information to facilitate treatment and research, improve health outcomes for patients and heighten accountability.

# Tough Questions

- **Whose ethics apply** when you're conducting research in another country?
- **Should people be told** the results of genetic tests for diseases that can't be treated?
- **What restrictions** may society place on individuals to promote public health?
- **Should patients get to choose** which doctors can see their electronic health record?
- **When should matters of personal** conscience trump professional responsibilities?
- **Should science ever be censored** to protect national security?
- **Should children be tested** for adult onset genetic diseases?

**2001 - 2011**

Ten  years of tackling tough questions.



INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
CENTER FOR BIOETHICS