



The Department of Medical Ethics & Health Policy, based in the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, stands as one of the premier institutions of research and education in medical ethics and health policy in the world. Under the leadership of Drs. Steven Joffe and Kevin Volpp, the Department's distinguished faculty produce and disseminate highly impactful scholarship and advise policymakers and governments both domestically and internationally. The Department also hosts three leading master's degree programs: a Master of Bioethics, a Master of Science in Medical Ethics, and an online Master of Health Care Innovation.

The Department pioneered the concept of bringing together medical ethics and health policy under one roof. By studying and teaching these fields in an integrated manner, the Department aims to ensure that health policy is ethically sound and that ethical norms have impact through evidence-based policies.



Our Research Areas

AGING
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
GLOBAL HEALTH AND
BIOETHICS
BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS
RESEARCH ETHICS
HEALTH CARE INNOVATION
HEALTH EQUITY
MENTAL HEALTH
HEALTH ECONOMICS
PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS
FOOD POLICY
HEALTH CARE POLICY ETHICS
NEUROETHICS
SCIENCE POLICY
ETHICS OF RESOURCE
ALLOCATION

Our Department at a Glance

22PRIMARY
FACULTY**2011**YEAR OUR
DEPARTMENT
WAS CREATED**170**PUBLICATIONS
IN 2020**10,000**APPEARANCES IN
THE MEDIA
IN 2020**150+**STUDENTS ENROLLED
IN OUR MASTER'S
PROGRAMS**\$16
MILLION**AWARDED SPONSORED
RESEARCH FUNDS IN FY20

Our Impact in Medical Ethics



Holly Fernandez Lynch, JD, MBE, is the founder and co-chair of [AEREO](#): **The Consortium to Advance Effective Research Ethics Oversight**. AEREO brings together 70+ experts in Institutional Review Boards (IRBs), research ethics, and empirical methods to **advance the shared mission of evaluating and improving**

the effectiveness of systems for protecting human participants in research. Current projects focus on developing a system of IRB precedent, understanding the scope of IRB expertise and perspective, studying how IRBs protect vulnerable participants, and examining the IRB's role in promoting justice, among others.

Dominic Sisti, PhD, applies the approaches and methods of medical ethics to understand and meet the challenges of mental health care across clinical, research, and policy contexts. One of his research interests is mental health in incarcerated individuals. Dr. Sisti works with an interdisciplinary group of researchers made up of clinicians, policy experts, and prison reformers to develop a **novel line of bioethics research that examines ethics and policy questions in correctional mental health care**.

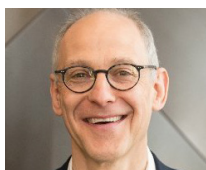
Zeke Emanuel, MD, PhD, served on then **President-elect Joe Biden's Transition COVID-19 Advisory Board**. This board worked with state

and local officials to determine the public health and economic steps necessary to get the virus under control, to deliver immediate relief to working families, and to address the unequal impact of the pandemic on communities of color and other disadvantaged groups. Dr. Emanuel also worked with a group of global experts and our department's **Matthew McCoy, PhD**, to develop the **"Fair Priority Model," which provides the framework for just global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines**.

Emily Largent, JD, PhD, RN, and **Jason Karlawish, MD**, who has a secondary appointment in the Department, wrote an influential [JAMA Neurology Viewpoint](#) on **the challenges that arise when Alzheimer's disease clinical trials end early**. This viewpoint was covered in [The New York Times](#) and resulted in a National Institute on Aging-supported work group that Dr. Largent co-chairs to **identify interventions to improve communication with and supports for participants when clinical trials end early**.



Steven Joffe



Ezekiel Emanuel



Autumn Fiester



Emily Largent



Holly Fernandez Lynch



Matthew McCoy



Jon Merz



Jonathan Moreno



Pamela Sankar



Harald Schmidt



Dominic Sisti



Anna Wexler

Our Impact in Health Policy



Research by **Christina Roberto, PhD**, on Philadelphia's "soda tax" demonstrated that after one year of its implementation, taxed beverage purchases dropped by 38%. This study **provided evidence that taxing sugar-sweetened beverages is one of the most effective policy strategies to reduce the purchase of these unhealthy drinks.**

Research by **Atheendar Venkataramani, MD, PhD**, demonstrated **the spillover mental health consequences of police killings**

of unarmed Black Americans. These findings informed historic statements by the American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, American College of Physicians, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which identified police violence – and structural racism more generally – as a critical public health issue. Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Ayanna Pressley cited this research in a letter to the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services.

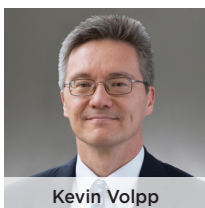
Since 2017, **Amol Navathe, MD, PhD**, has provided guidance and conducted research to inform the **roll-out of a new HMSA (Blue Cross Blue Shield of Hawaii) provider payment initiative that shifted primary care provider payment from a fee-for-service model to a new value-based framework.** This payment model, which incentivizes providers for both efficiency and effectiveness, has now been implemented throughout most of the state of Hawaii.

After a pilot study led by **Kevin Volpp, MD, PhD**, indicated that incentives can double smoking cessation program enrollment, Volpp's team conducted three trials that demonstrated a **tripling of smoking cessation rates in General**

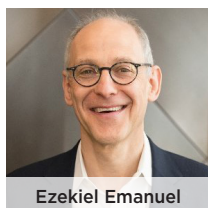
Electric employees, CVS employees, and members of 54 other employers. This led to benefit design changes at GE and CVS and **contributed to 44% of large employers now using incentives for smoking cessation.**

Harsha Thirumurthy, PhD, and **Alison Bутtenheim, PhD, MBA**, who has a secondary appointment in the Department, received a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to **establish a first-of-its-kind nudge unit focused on HIV prevention in South Africa.** In partnership with the University of Witwatersrand's Health Economics and Epidemiology Research Office (HE²RO), Drs. Thirumurthy and Bутtenheim launched Indlela: Behavioural Insights for Better Health.

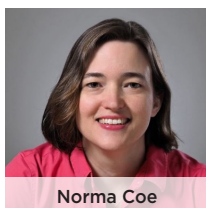
Norma B. Coe, PhD, leads The Policy and Economics of Disability, Aging, and Long Term Care (PEDAL) Lab, which studies issues centered around aging and disability, including insurance design, health care, long-term care, end-of-life care, and Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias, and **to provide policymakers the evidence-base to improve care for older adults and reduce spending.**



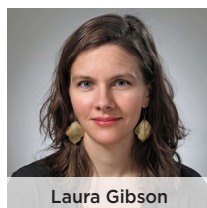
Kevin Volpp



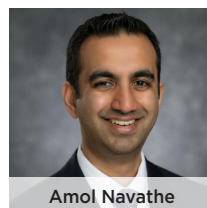
Ezekiel Emanuel



Norma Coe



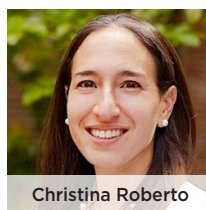
Laura Gibson



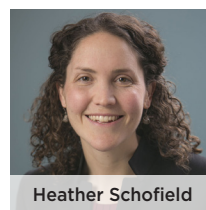
Amol Navathe



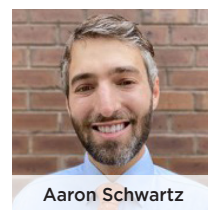
Ravi Parikh



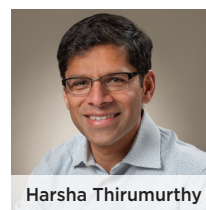
Christina Roberto



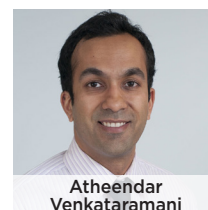
Heather Schofield



Aaron Schwartz



Harsha Thirumurthy



Atheendar Venkataramani