



Conference Announcement and Call for Abstracts

LAW, RELIGION, AND AMERICAN HEALTH CARE

Friday and Saturday, May 8-9, 2015

Harvard Law School, Cambridge, MA

The Petrie-Flom Center for Health Law Policy, Biotechnology, and Bioethics at Harvard Law School is pleased to announce plans for our 2015 annual conference, this year entitled: ["Law, Religion, and American Health Care."](#)

Conference Description

Religion and medicine have historically gone hand in hand, but increasingly have come into conflict in the U.S. as health care has become both more secular and more heavily regulated. Law has a dual role here, simultaneously generating conflict between religion and health care, for example through new coverage mandates or legally permissible medical interventions that violate religious norms, while also acting as a tool for religious accommodation and protection of conscience.

This conference, and anticipated edited volume, will aim to: (1) identify the various ways in which law intersects with religion and health care in the United States; (2) understand the role of law in creating or mediating conflict between religion and health care; and (3) explore potential legal solutions to allow religion and health care to simultaneously flourish in a culturally diverse nation.

Call for Abstracts

We welcome submissions on both broad conceptual questions and more specific policy issues. Potential topics might include:

- Analysis of the First Amendment, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and other federal, state, and local legal provisions that come into play at the intersection between religion and health care
- The Affordable Care Act and employer-based health care coverage, including the contraceptives mandate and related court decisions
- Legal obligations and accommodations of religious health care organizations
- Protection (or not) of health professional conscience
- Health care decision-making for minors with religious parents
- Religious objection v. discriminatory behavior
- Informed consent and information flow, e.g., religious objection to providing certain information, inclusion of religious information in consent disclosures, etc.
- "Medicalization" of religious beliefs, e.g., regulation of homosexual conversion therapy
- Abortion policy, including clinic protests and protections, and its relationship to religion
- Embryonic stem cell policy and its relationship to religion
- End-of-life care, including assisted suicide, and its relationship to religion
- Complicity as both a legal and religious concept
- Comparative analysis, e.g., between professions, health care practices, countries, etc.

Please note that this list is not meant to be exhaustive; we hope to receive abstracts related to the conference's general theme even if a particular topic was not specifically listed here. However, proposals that lack a clear linkage to all three aspects of the conference – law, religion, and health care – will not be considered. Law will be treated broadly to include governmental policy decisions more generally. Abstracts must propose or outline an argument/position, rather than merely stating a topic, in order to enable us to evaluate them.

In an effort to encourage interdisciplinary and international dialogue, we welcome submissions from legal scholars and lawyers, of course, but also from bioethicists, philosophers, scholars of religion and religious studies, clinicians, government officials and staff, international scholars and regulators discussing how their systems have handled these issues, and others who have a meaningful contribution to make on this topic. We welcome submissions from advocacy organizations, think tanks, and others outside academia, but emphasize that this is a scholarly conference, and abstracts/papers will be held to academic standards of argumentation and support.

How to Participate

If you are interested in participating, please send a 1-page abstract of the paper you would plan to present to petrie-flom@law.harvard.edu as soon as possible, but not later than **December 1, 2014**. If your abstract is selected, your final paper will be due on April 3, 2015, and you will be assigned a presentation slot for the conference dates. *Please note that presenters are expected to attend the conference for its full duration.* We will pay travel expenses for presenters who must travel to Cambridge; co-authored papers must name a single presenter.

In the past, we have successfully turned several of our conferences into edited volumes (e.g., with Oxford, MIT, Columbia, and Johns Hopkins University presses). If such a volume arises out of this conference, our expectation is that conference presenters will publish their papers with us as part of the edited volume. Those who do not wish their work to appear in a potential edited volume should so indicate on the abstract. We will accept conference papers of all lengths and styles (e.g., law review, medical, philosophy, or policy journal, etc.), but chapters in conference volumes are generally limited to about 5,000 words. Previous conference participants have been able to publish their submissions in different formats in multiple venues, for example both as a short book chapter and a longer law review article.

How to Register

Registration information is available [here](#). Attendance is free and open to the public, but space is limited. Stay tuned for the conference agenda, which will be posted to our [website](#) once abstracts have been selected.

Questions

Please contact Holly Fernandez Lynch, Executive Director, Petrie-Flom Center, with any questions: hlynch@law.harvard.edu, 617.384.5475.