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Letter from the Editors

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Welcome to the Fall 2012 issue of the Health Law & Policy Brief. Since our last edition, much has changed in the state of healthcare, both in the U.S. and abroad. The Supreme Court affirmed the right to affordable health coverage for every American in a highly publicized and highly controversial case decided in June. Internationally, significant crises in Syria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and other areas in the Middle East and Africa threaten the access to appropriate healthcare services for millions of individuals. Because of these challenges, it is more important than ever that healthcare issues be considered by politicians, lawyers, and human rights activists.

This issue is a very special one, as it represents the culmination of intensive thought and collaborative effort by our authors, our staff members, the Washington College of Law (WCL), and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Earlier this year, WCL joined with PAHO to organize and present the Inaugural Conference on Global Health, Gender and Human Rights, which featured a multitude of working groups on pressing global health and human rights issues. While the focus of the United States health law community this year has been inward-looking, scrutinizing the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act, these working groups were very much outward-looking, providing a critical situational analysis of international public health, gender, and human rights concerns covering marginalized peoples who are often unable to speak out for themselves.

Each of these working groups was guided by a white paper authored by WCL students in collaboration with PAHO advisors and global health law experts. These papers, further edited and refined, are presented in this issue of the Brief. The working groups then formulated a series of recommendations stemming from these white papers and their subsequent discussions; these recommendations are included at the end of each article as annexes, which we hope will assist policy makers and thought leaders in charting a better and more effective course for international health instruments and achieving health goals in developing societies.

We are tremendously excited to be working so closely with PAHO, an organization with an illustrious record in the international health and human rights community. Through PAHO and a generous sponsorship from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Guatemala, this issue of the Brief will be translated in its entirety into Spanish, significantly furthering our international visibility and conveying more broadly the important messages contained within these pages.

We hope that 2013 brings you good luck and good health. For questions or comments about the Brief, please contact us.

Best regards,

Jake & Katherine