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## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

In this issue of the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, we proudly present the symposium “Biomarker Research and Validation: Current Challenges, Future Opportunities,” guest-edited by Spencer Phillips Hey, a Research Scientist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston and Co-Director of Research Ethics at the Center for Bioethics at Harvard Medical School. Hey and his team of authors interrogate the promises and pitfalls of biomarker validation, writing that “since biomarker endpoints can typically be measured more quickly than ‘hard’ endpoints like patient survival, when all goes well, such uses of biomarkers can reduce the time and cost needed to assess the efficacy of new treatments relative to assessments based on actual clinical endpoints.” However, the authors of these papers also recognize challenges associated with this kind of measurable biomarker; particularly that these biomarkers need to be rigorously and judiciously validated to ensure that the endpoints they are measuring are beneficial to the patient being treated. Ultimately the symposium takes a balanced and nuanced look at biomarkers and validation, and does so in a way that is accessible and useful to our large multidisciplinary readership.

This space also affords me an opportunity to promote an exciting new ASLME conference. In October 2019, American University Washington College of Law and the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics will convene the second “Next Steps in Health Reform Conference,” a meeting dedicated to connecting national leaders in health care law, policy, economics, and administration to track implementation of the Affordable Care Act and other statutes, identify developments on the horizon, and offer bold, new ideas for balancing cost, access, quality and patient autonomy in our rapidly changing health care system. The conference, which is chaired by American law professor and ASLME President Lindsay Wiley, brings together expert speakers and panelists from a host of fields, including a number of members, authors, and old friends of our organization. The first “Next Steps” conference was a huge success, and we do hope you can take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to join us in discussing one of the most important issues in America’s public life, and certainly an issue that will shape the 2020 presidential election. If you would like to join us in DC, please visit our website ([www.aslme.org](http://www.aslme.org)) for event details and registration. Of course, if you cannot join us in Washington, look for the papers delivered at the conference in a future edition of *JLME*.

Ted Hutchinson  
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