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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As we pass the six-month mark of the United States' continually uphill battle with the COVID-19 virus, it is sometimes easy to forget that our nation faces myriad other challenges to our collective health and well-being. These range from structural inequities, to a deeply flawed healthcare "system," to diseases and medical conditions that are no less threatening and worrisome than they would be without the existence of a global pandemic. In spite of all of this, however, there is no threat to our nation and our planet more existential than that of climate change. Even as our country faces the coronavirus we have simultaneously struggled with massive wildfires in the west and hurricanes in the south and east. More extreme weather will inevitably follow in the weeks and months ahead, as these weather-related events are closely related to human-driven climate change. The knock-on effect of these climate events are closely tied to the health of the public, both at the meta- and individual level. It is a challenge our nation will be facing long after COVID-19 has become an unhappy memory.

It is with this sobering future in mind that we publish the symposium "Climate Change and the Legal, Ethical and Health Issues Facing Healthcare and Public Health Systems," guest-edited by our longtime friend Jason Smith and his colleagues Chandra Ganesh and Michael Schmeltz. The editors and authors of this issue group the health impacts of climate change into direct impacts, environmental system mediated impacts, and socially mediated impacts, while exploring topics such as the sustainability of healthcare, the intersection of public health law and environmental law, and how to reframe bioethics in a world of sustained climate change, among many other fascinating topics. We believe the collection as a whole asks vital questions as we move forward in this new reality of extreme climate events and almost constant change.

Of course more than a few commentators have connected COVID-19 itself to climate change, with good reason. This issue also examines that subject, while our timely columns continue to explore the current reality and imagined future of our nation and our world as we reckon with the terrible aftermath of this pandemic. In all it is not the happiest issue of *JLME* we have ever produced, but perhaps none have been more timely or necessary.

Ted Hutchinson
Editor
JLME