

## EDITOR'S FAREWELL

**H**ard as it is to believe, with this issue we conclude the ninth volume of *Health and Human Rights*. As I move on from my editorial affiliation with the journal, as associate editor at its inception and as editor in the time following, I look back at the last 12 years with a sense of pride for our collective accomplishments and, naturally, also with a mix of emotions.

When we began in 1994, not only was there no field called health and human rights but there was little engagement among the fields of public health, medicine, law, and human rights. Certainly an academic peer-reviewed journal seemed little more than a dream. Who would read it? And more to the point who would write for it? Where would we find qualified reviewers? In spite of these questions, Jonathan Mann had the vision to insist that if there was to be a field of health and human rights then there must also be a journal. He had the foresight to see that a forum was needed for rigorous academic exploration of ideas that would not fit easily within the mainstream journals of the relevant fields. Far more importantly, he realized that such a journal was needed for the field to exist let alone to grow. I am pleased that we have lived up to this initial vision. The journal is now widely respected by academics, policy makers, and activists alike precisely for the key role it has played in bringing academic rigor to a field that has now established itself as a cutting edge discipline.

The start, in truth, was fairly rocky. We were committed to creating a journal with wide appeal that would be both read and written by people on every continent. However, we had no idea what it meant to run a journal. Publishing four times a year seemed a good idea, but without sufficient budget or staff, let alone sufficient quality articles, we soon realized that twice a year was more appropriate. As a fledgling journal, we ensured that our first

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issue was widely and freely disseminated on all four corners of the globe. We also committed to providing free access for individuals and small organizations in developing countries—a commitment upheld to this day. Our editorial mission has been to ensure a journal with credibility in all relevant fields and to build on the foundations of a broad range of disciplines in order to create effective bridges, and in so doing to illuminate the power of health and human rights. Yet, to do this has required stimulating the interest of writers in expanding the scope of their work beyond their traditional paths and securing peer reviewers knowledgeable about both public health and human rights (often not found in the same person when linked also to the contents of an article), as well as working closely with authors strong in one field to help them to reach the standards necessary for the other.

Over time, as the field of health and human rights has grown, the volume of quality submissions has also grown. This allowed us, as the discipline grew richer, to make an editorial decision to have each journal issue capture a theme, rather than simply bring together wide ranging and disparate topics. Our thematic issues have been widely heralded and are often sought by health and human rights practitioners and scholars years after they were published. One of the constraints facing the journal has been the time and magnitude of work needed for print copies to reach their intended readership. As the publishing world evolved, we took steps to marshal new online technologies. I am pleased to note that the archival service JSTOR has recently requested that *Health and Human Rights* be added to its online collection. This will ensure that all back issues are available via the Internet as the journal goes forward.

In 2006, the field of health and human rights is now well established professionally and academically. At a time when the close connections between public health and human rights remain a matter of suspicion to some, it is fortunate that there are now many courses, numerous conferences, and increasing numbers of students and professionals interested in thorough explorations of the health and human rights nexus. In addition, journals ranging from the *American Journal of Public Health* and *Global Public Health*, on the one hand, to *Human Rights Quarterly* and

other legal periodicals on the other are dedicating departments and theme issues to relevant topics. I have committed to working with these and other partners as they go forward to help ensure that quality pieces of the type we have published in *Health and Human Rights* see the light of day in an ever-increasing range of venues.

In closing, I would like to extend my warmest wishes to you, readers of the journal, and urge you to engage even more vigorously in health and human rights concerns, and to continue to make new connections between principles, concepts, practice, and field experience. I would also like to thank our reviewers who have consistently enriched the quality of the journal and on occasion supported authors not only in clarifying their thoughts but in producing superior articles which have come to be regarded as classics in the field. Thanks are particularly extended to authors, both those whose contributions were eventually published and also those whose work could not be accommodated in the journal's tight publication space. My gratitude is also extended to those members of the Editorial Board who have provided guidance in shaping the journal over the years. The Association François-Xavier Bagnoud and the Harvard School of Public Health have made it possible for the journal to have a home and contributed financially to its publication for which we should all be thankful. And last but not least, I wish to acknowledge the relentless efforts of the journal staff who help bring this publication into being.

I am proud to have been affiliated with all, and grateful for the energy and inspiration they provided me to strive towards a better journal and an ever-expanding and deepening field of health and human rights. The journal's mission remains urgent and I wish the journal and its new editors well as they carry it forward.

Sofia Gruskin  
Editor