



from the director's desk

BY MICHAEL J. SLEASMAN, PHD
Managing Director & Research Scholar

Warm greetings from the Center. I am pleased to announce that this will be my last *Director's Desk* piece as I hand over authorial responsibility for this column to our new Executive Director, Paige C. Cunningham, JD. (See inside for additional information about Paige's appointment as well as an interview of her by Courtney Beasley, CBHD Communication Intern.) I, on the other hand, am glad to return to my official duties with the Center helping to run the daily operations and to provide leadership for the Center's research agenda.

Along with announcing the appointment of our new Executive Director in this issue, we are excited to unveil our new logo and the long anticipated redesign of *Dignitas*. This expanded template creates additional space for us to bring a wider variety of print based resources to you through this quarterly communication.

While we have much to celebrate in the work of the Center with the addition of several new staff members over the past few months, the march of bioethical concerns continues. With the release of NIH guidelines concerning embryonic stem cell research, the dismissal of the entire President's Council on Bioethics on grounds that it was too philosophical and not focused enough on practical recommendations, the recent move in New York to approve payments for human eggs to be used for research purposes, and the high profile focus on healthcare reform, it has never been more important to be actively informed and involved in the pressing bioethical issues of our day. This issue of *Dignitas* seeks to raise awareness of several important conversations in the field, from the questions arising from the excesses of a nip/tuck culture to creating better public awareness surrounding cord blood. Hans Madueme, MD, offers a commentary on the ethical complexities in dealing with physical enhancements. We continue our recent emphasis on student interns and insights that they have gleaned from their time at the Center, as well as to bring highlights from our fellows and staff. There is also the second installment of our article recommendations. For the purposes of creating better awareness, we also include an informational piece by Research Assistant, Kirsten Riggan on "Cord Blood Stem Cells." Given the morally unquestionable promise and benefits of cord blood stem cells, the Center hopes that this information will encourage you, our readership, to become more active in spreading the word about the significant value of this material previously discarded as medical waste. As always, we appreciate your comments and suggestions (info@cbhd.org).

Finally, for our members we have included some newly expanded benefits of membership. In addition to CBHD event discounts and your annual subscription of *Ethics & Medicine*, we have secured discounts for several professional journals including *Christian Bioethics* and *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*. An additional journal discount will be made available to members in the next issue of *Dignitas*. Beyond these select discounts we continue to look for ways to increase the value of CBHD membership benefits and are grateful for the ongoing partnership with our members. Membership is on a calendar year basis, and we will begin our 2010 membership campaign in the coming months. If you have any questions regarding membership please contact us at membership@cbhd.org.

Sincerely,

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