WHAT WE DO

THE O’NEILL INSTITUTE WAS FOUNDED ON THE IDEA THAT LAW HAS BEEN, AND WILL REMAIN, A FUNDAMENTAL TOOL FOR SOLVING CRITICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD.
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Photo Left: Women in Niger attend a USAID program. O’Neill partnered with USAID to launch the Law of International Development Initiative, under the leadership of Susan Pascocello.

Credit: Erica Frendach for USAID

Cover Photo credit: Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images
WHO WE ARE

THE O’NEILL INSTITUTE for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University was established in 2007 through the generous philanthropy of Linda and Timothy O’Neill to respond to the need for innovative solutions to the most pressing national and international health concerns. Housed at Georgetown University Law Center in Washington, DC, the O’Neill Institute reflects the importance of law in health policy analysis.

By contributing to a deeper understanding of the ways in which law can be used to improve health, the O’Neill Institute works with key decision-makers in the public, private, and civil society sectors to deploy the law as a positive tool to enable individuals and populations in the United States and around the world to lead healthier lives.

This year, nearly 40 staff members worked across the O’Neill Institute’s SIX THEMATIC AREAS:

- **THE ADDICTION AND PUBLIC POLICY INITIATIVE** advances a public health approach to substance use disorders and the opioid epidemic through legal and policy strategies that promote evidence-based treatment and recovery.

- **THE GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY AND POLITICS INITIATIVE** focuses comparatively and internationally at the intersection of public health, law, and governance.

- **HEALTHY FAMILIES INITIATIVE** studies the relationship of international human rights law to positive health outcomes, in particular the impact of litigation.

- **THE INFECTIOUS DISEASE INITIATIVES** focus on legal, regulatory, and policy responses to HIV, Hepatitis C, and other infectious diseases in the United States, with an emphasis on elevating community voices and knowledge and integrating this with current research to offer actionable policy solutions.

- **THE CENTER FOR INNOVATION IN GLOBAL HEALTH, POLICY, AND LAW** works to develop a ground-up approach that elevates local voices and expertise, addresses structural inequities and rigorously tests innovative solutions to ensure sustainable impact at scale.

- **THE LAW OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE** serves as hub for innovative solutions to development challenges, and works to mentor and train the next generation of international development law leaders.

Faculty Director Lawrence Gostin
LETTER FROM O’NEILL’S
FACULTY AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

THE O’NEILL INSTITUTE WAS FOUNDED ON THE IDEA THAT LAW HAS BEEN, AND WILL REMAIN, A FUNDAMENTAL TOOL FOR SOLVING CRITICAL HEALTH PROBLEMS. With this proposition in mind, O’Neill has grown over the past fourteen years into the organization it is today: 37 full-time and 41 part-time staff, 26 funded projects, ranging from $20,000 to $3 million U.S. dollars, 21 unique funders and an annual budget of nearly $4.5 million U.S. dollars in fiscal year 2020. This year, O’Neill teams worked in six distinct substantive areas, from domestic addiction policy to global health policy and politics, with partners and colleagues from over 50 different countries.

As this new decade begins, the world’s eyes are on health, equity, and the law. COVID-19 has spread across the globe, substantially amplifying existing strengths and weaknesses in health systems, equality, and political leadership. From the start of the pandemic, O’Neill experts have worked to share and disseminate information and critical perspectives through every major U.S. and international publication, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, NPR, and PBS, and provided commentary on numerous national and international broadcasts, from MSNBC and CNN to BBC. Our staff have appeared, been quoted, or published in scholarly journals hundreds of times, and published groundbreaking articles in the Lancet, Journal of the American Medical Association, Foreign Affairs, and Science.

Building on its existing portfolio of work, the O’Neill Institute has expanded its capacity to support the COVID-19 response with cutting edge research and projects. These include the first quantitative national study of the impact of COVID-19 on Black Americans, developed in partnership with researchers and epidemiologists, finding that Black counties were only 22% of counties in the United States, but accounted for 52% of cases and 58% of deaths nationally. O’Neill also created the COVID-19 Law Lab, which, in partnership with the WHO, UNAIDS, and UNDP, supports evidence-based policy making, and launched in July 2020 with law and policy from 190 countries.

Although COVID-19 is all-consuming today, we must remember that public health and health law has been, and will be again, more than the current pandemic. As you will see from this retrospective of selected projects, these last twelve months have produced an incredible array of work from our extremely talented staff. From the HIV Policy Lab, the Hepatitis Policy Project, and the Families: Now project, to our new Global Center for Legal Innovation on Food Environments, funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, and our new Law of International Development Initiative (LIDI), launched as an innovative public-private partnership between the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and Georgetown University Law Center, we are so proud of the Institute’s work over this past year. Not matched anywhere in its breadth, depth, innovation, or impact.


With launch events in DC, London, Bristol, Edinburgh, and Geneva, O’Neill welcomed keynote speakers including Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, and Baroness Hale of Richmond, the president of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, who highlighted the power of the law to encourage healthy living and to discourage unhealthy living by “nudging people in the right direction.”

Expanding on its cross-campus engagement with Georgetown University’s Global Health Initiative, this year saw the launch of a pioneering, cross-campus collaboration: the Center for Innovation in Global Health, Policy and Law Initiative. Creating a bridge between the Georgetown University’s Medical and Law Centers, this partnership allows for the robust engagement of faculty and staff from both schools around the translation of global health innovations into effective health policies and laws.

The beginning of this year and decade have demonstrated the importance of public health and the law. With the global expertise, leadership and impact, the O’Neill Institute, in collaboration with our partners, friends, and colleagues, new and old, hopes to help end this pandemic, and improve health around the world, with justice.

LAWRENCE O. GOSTIN
FACULTY DIRECTOR

KATIE GOTTSCHALK
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RESPONDING TO COVID-19

"TO ENSURE STRONG LEGAL FRAMEWORKS ARE CRITICAL FOR NATIONAL COVID-19 RESPONSES, [AND A] STRONG FOUNDATION OF LAW FOR HEALTH IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER BEFORE."

DR. TEDROS GHEBREYESUS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

COVID-19 LAW LAB
COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD HAVE IMPLEMENTED NEW LAWS AND POLICIES IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. WELL-DEIGNED LAWS AND POLICIES ARE CRITICAL TO BUILDING STRONG HEALTH SYSTEMS, EVALUATING AND APPROVING SAFE AND EFFECTIVE DRUGS AND VACCINES, ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS, AND ENFORCING ACTIONS TO CREATE HEALTHIER AND SAFER PUBLIC SPACES AND WORKPLACES.


WELL-DEIGNED LAWS CAN STRENGTHEN NATIONAL HEALTH SYSTEMS AND ARE KEY TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHO INTERNATIONAL HEALTH REGULATIONS: SURVEILLANCE, INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL, MANAGEMENT OF TRAVEL AND TRADE, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES TO MAINTAIN ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES. ALTERNATIVELY, LAWS THAT ARE POORLY DESIGNED, IMPLEMENTED, OR ENFORCED CAN HARM MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS, ENTRENCH STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION, AND HINDER EFFORTS TO END THE PANDEMIC.

THE COVID-19 LAW LAB WAS LAUNCHED WITH A FOCUS ON LAW AND POLICY IN SIX COMPREHENSIVE AREAS: STATES OF EMERGENCY, MOVEMENT AND DISTANCING RESTRICTIONS, ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE MEASURES, ACCESS TO MEDICINE, DISEASE SURVEILLANCE AND TECHNOLOGY, AND HIV AND COVID-19. THESE LAWS AND POLICIES ARE FURTHER SORTED INTO SPECIFIC CATEGORIES, INCLUDING CURFEWS, ESSENTIAL SERVICES, FACE COVERINGS, LOCKDOWNS, JUDICIAL OVERSIGHT, MIGRANTS, PHYSICAL DISTANCE AND CRIMINAL PENALTIES. THESE CATEGORIES ARE DESIGNED TO HELP RESEARCHERS AND POLICYMAKERS ACCESS SPECIFIC INFORMATION AND COMPARE LAWS ACROSS COUNTRIES.

AS THE PANDEMIC CONTINUES AND LAW EVOLVES, THE LAW LAB WILL CONTINUE TO GROW. TO ENSURE THE DATABASE REMAINS UP-TO-DATE, O’NEILL AND ITS PARTNERS ASK EXPERTS AROUND THE WORLD TO CONTRIBUTE DOCUMENTS TO THE COLLECTION. IN ADDITION TO THIS GROWING REPOSITORY OF GOVERNMENT-ISSUED LAW AND POLICY, THE COVID-19 LAW LAB WILL ALSO ADD ANALYSIS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAIR, EFFECTIVE, AND EVIDENCE-BASED LAWMAKING.

IN THE FACE OF COVID-19, DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL LAWS CAN PLAY VITAL ROLES IN BREAKING COVID-19 CHAINS OF TRANSMISSION AND ENDING COLLECTIVE SUFFERING. THIS CENTRALIZED DATABASE FOR LAW AND POLICY SERVES AS A KEY RESOURCE, AS GOVERNMENTS LEARN FROM PAST ACTIONS TO INFORM FUTURE POLICY DECISIONS WITH THE GOAL OF PROTECTING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES AND ADHERING TO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS.

"LAWS AND POLICIES THAT ARE GROUNDED IN SCIENCE, EVIDENCE, AND HUMAN RIGHTS CAN ENABLE PEOPLE TO ACCESS HEALTH SERVICES, PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM COVID-19 AND LIVE FREE FROM STIGMA, DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE. THE COVID-19 LAW LAB IS AN IMPORTANT TOOL FOR SHARING GOOD PRACTICES ON LAWS AND POLICIES."

ACHIM STEINER
ADMINISTRATOR, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

DRAWING ON O’NEILL’S DIVERSE COMMUNITY

THE LEGAL SOLUTIONS NETWORK
THE ONGOING PANDEMIC HAS HIGHLIGHTED THE PRESSING NEED FOR RESILIENT, ACCESSIBLE, AND AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS, AS WELL AS FOR ROBUST LAWS AND POLICIES THAT WILL ENSURE THAT RESPONSES ARE SWIFT, EQUITABLE, AND IN LINE WITH PUBLIC HEALTH GOALS. CRAFTING LAWS TO ADDRESS HEALTH IS A COMPLEX PROCESS THAT NECESSARILY COMBINES POLITICAL, POLICY, BUDGETARY, AND TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS. IN 2019, O’NEILL ESTABLISHED THE LEGAL SOLUTIONS NETWORK (LSN), IN COLLABORATION WITH THE WHO, UNDP, UNAIDS, AND THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU). LAUNCHED AS A FOLLOW-ON TO THE LANCET-O’NEILL COMMISSION ON GLOBAL HEALTH AND THE LAW, THE LSN IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD SEEKING TO HARNES THE POWER OF LAW TO ADDRESS CRITICAL HEALTH ISSUES. WORKING INITIALLY WITH TARGET COUNTRIES, THE LSN COLLABORATION PROVIDES EVIDENCE-BASED LEGAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CUSTOMIZABLE TECHNICAL ADVICE TO NATIONAL LEADERS SEEKING TO DEVELOP AND REFORM EFFECTIVE LAWS, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES.

LEVERAGING THE DEEP EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCES OF ALL ITS PARTNERS, LSN WILL CONTRIBUTE TOOLS AND ANALYSIS TO THE USER-DRIVEN DIGITAL COVID-19 LAW LAB PLATFORM THAT LINKS PUBLIC SECTOR, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND OTHER POLICYMAKERS WITH TAILORED TOOLS AND SERVICES THEY NEED WHEN CONSIDERING HEALTH-RELATED LAWS IN THEIR COUNTRIES.
RESPONDING TO COVID-19

BLACK COUNTIES WERE ONLY 22% OF COUNTIES IN THE U.S., BUT ACCOUNTED FOR 52% OF CASES AND 58% OF DEATHS NATIONALLY.

DEMONSTRATING COVID-19’S IMPACTS ON COMMUNITIES COLOR

Early in the COVID-19 crisis, reports emerged of noticeable disparities in both infection rates and disease outcomes, with Black Americans disproportionately impacted by the virus. Similar disparities also emerged among Latinx Americans and Native American communities. Infectious Disease Initiatives Director Jeffrey S. Crowley worked with a team of researchers and epidemiologists, led by amfAR Vice President Greg Millett, to provide a quantitative assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on Black Americans. Because most of the COVID-19 testing data that is collected by health departments does not include information on race or ethnicity, it is impossible to make direct, real-time assessments of these emerging disparities. The research team got around this data shortfall by analyzing COVID-19 infections and deaths in U.S. counties with an above average population of African Americans. They showed that as the percentage of Black residents increases in a county, the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths also increase. Strikingly, although rates of underlying conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension, were higher in counties with more Black residents, these chronic conditions did not account for higher rates of COVID-19 cases or deaths among Black Americans. Instead, researchers found that structural factors, like lack of health insurance access, employment, and living conditions, drove disparate COVID-19 impacts. This study was the first quantitative national study of the impact of COVID-19 on Black Americans and found that Black counties were only 22% of counties in the United States, but accounted for 52% of cases and 58% of deaths nationally.

Led by Carlos Rodriguez-Diaz of George Washington University, a second study used the same methodology to evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on Latinx Americans. This team found that COVID-19 cases were greater in Latinx counties nationally, and deaths were greater in Latinx counties in the Midwest. The HIV Policy Project often serves as a bridge between researchers and policymakers. In these studies, both published in *Annals of Epidemiology*, Crowley played a crucial role in recommending both immediate and long-term health policy actions.

UNDERSTANDING COVID-19 AND THE LAW

O’Neill experts are at the forefront of the public discussion of COVID-19’s impact on health, society, and law.

COVID-19 AND ADDICTION

COVID-19 has caused significant disruption to treatment and harm reduction services for people with substance use disorders. The Addiction and Public Policy team hosted two virtual discussions addressing new waivers to regulations on telehealth and medication-based treatment, and how communities are grappling with the simultaneous public health emergencies of opioid-involved overdoses and COVID-19. In a virtual briefing, Representative Paul Tonko (NY-20) noted, “COVID-19 threatens to reverse even the minimal progress that we have made in slowing drug overdose deaths... now more than ever this disease of despair deserves a response rooted in hope.”

THE POLITICS OF THE WHO

In April 2020, the O’Neill Institute and Brown University’s Watson Institute sponsored a virtual discussion on the politics of the WHO. As the Trump administration threatened to cut ties with the WHO, O’Neill’s Matthew Kavanagh spoke with Nilsan Chorev of Brown University and Jeremy Youde of the University of Minnesota Duluth. The rich discussion touched on the history of the WHO, political incentives of China and the United States, and how politics might drive future reform of the International Health Regulations.

COVID-19 IN THE AMERICAS

The Healthy Families Initiative hosted eight Spanish-language webinars on the COVID-19 pandemic as it was emerging in the Americas. These sessions analyzed various government reactions to the pandemic, a particularly vital task as different countries decided how to respond. In one particularly successful collaboration with the Organization of American States examined the right to health and its role in the COVID-19 epidemic.

THE HIV COMMUNITY HAS OFTEN LED THE WAY IN THE GLOBAL RESPONSE TO COVID-19. FROM FRONTLINE HEALTH WORKERS, HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF, VACCINE RESEARCHERS, EPIDEMIOLOGISTS, OR NIH RESEARCH NETWORKS, HIV EXPERTS HAVE JUMPED INTO THE FRAY.”

JEFFREY S. CROWLEY

O’Neill holds a unique designation as the WHO Collaborating Center on National and Global Health Law—the only one of its kind in the world. This year, O’Neill has supported the WHO on its highest priorities, including universal health coverage, migration and health and, most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. According to O’Neill’s Lawrence Gostin, “Our work with the WHO is among the Institute’s most important and enduring contribution.”

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JEFFREY S. CROWLEY
INFORMING DOMESTIC POLICY DEBATES

ADVANCING EVIDENCE-BASED ADDICTION TREATMENT

The Addiction and Public Policy Initiative works at the intersection of law and public health to promote policies that improve the well-being of individuals impacted by substance use disorder. The Initiative’s work is guided by these principles: (1) the voices of people with lived experience must be included in all policy discussions; (2) The policy development process is enhanced when people with multiple perspectives are engaged; and (3) “cura personalis”—caring for the whole person—must be reflected in policymaking.

People involved in the criminal justice and child welfare systems are among those at highest risk for opioid overdose and death. In October 2019, the Addiction and Public Policy team published “Applying the Evidence,” which outlines legal and policy strategies to increase access to evidence-based treatment to people in these systems.

To advance these ideas, the Addiction and Public Policy team also launched Advancing the Evidence, a clearinghouse on law and policy related to access to medications for opioid use disorder and an incubator for the development of strategies to advance evidence-based treatment in correctional settings. This project seeks to provide technical assistance, provide a forum for experts and practitioners to share best practices, track legislative initiatives, and convene meetings to drive reform on access to evidence-based treatment in corrections.

Director Regina LaBelle and Associate Director Shelly Weizman also brought together policymakers, leaders in criminal justice and law enforcement, and experts in addiction treatment, many of whom have lived experience, over multiple in-person and virtual convenings. These discussions focused on immediate interventions to reduce overdose deaths, and steps that can be taken to move community responses from rescue to recovery.

O’NEILL AND CONGRESS

O’Neill experts continue to influence policy outcomes through sound research and analysis. O’Neill’s Regina LaBelle joined Representatives Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-01), Annie Kuster (NH-02), and Donald Norcross (NJ-01) for an event hosted by the bipartisan Opioid Task Force, to address the dual crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and the opioid epidemic.

In June 2020, O’Neill’s Matthew Kavanagh and Lawrence Gostin collaborated with 850 public health experts to deliver a letter to Congress condemning the Trump administration’s withdrawal from the WHO. In July, Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) introduced the No WHO Withdrawal Act, which prohibits the use of congressional appropriated funds to withdraw the United States from the WHO.

In July 2020, O’Neill’s Lawrence Gostin hosted Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) for a conversation on the WHO and the U.S.–China rivalry, with Beth Cameron of Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI) and James Palmer of Foreign Policy.

CURTAILING HEPATITIS C

The Infectious Disease Initiatives focus on efforts to respond to the ongoing domestic HIV epidemic, support policy responses to strengthen hepatitis prevention and care (with an emphasis on hepatitis C), and address other public health threats often associated with disadvantaged populations such as racial and ethnic minorities and low-income people.

The Hepatitis Policy Project complements the work of viral hepatitis program administrators, health care providers, and consumer stakeholders and advocates by combining expertise in health care financing and policy with legal analysis and scholarship. In March 2020, Infectious Disease Initiatives Senior Associate Sonia Canzater released the issue brief, “Big Ideas: Correctional Institutions are a Critical Intervention Point for Hepatitis C Elimination.” This article details underutilized opportunities to curtail the transmission of hepatitis C in U.S. correctional facilities, despite disparate rates of the illness found among criminal justice-involved persons.

CHANGING THE PARADIGM FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES

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ADVANCING THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

DECRIMINALIZING HEALTH SERVICES

The Healthy Families Initiative (HFI) engages in academic research on the decriminalization of health services in order to improve reproductive health in Latin America. To better understand the challenges in the local context, HFI collaborated with the Medical College of Chile to host a working group on the rights and obligations associated with conscientious objection, including more than 30 lead providers of hospitals and clinics from around the country. In El Salvador, HFI hosted a discussion with justices from high courts in Chile and Ecuador on health, human rights and constitutional law. The event was attended by more than 170 judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and other attorneys. The HFI team also prepared and submitted six amicus briefs grounded in international human rights law and comparative constitutional law arguments to support national and international courts’ resolution of cases involving access to reproductive health services.

In January 2020, the Healthy Families Initiative started the Colombia pilot of “Families: Now” (Families of Today for the World of Tomorrow) in collaboration with Bridges. It is a platform to promote the well-being of families through human rights, inviting citizens to revisit how they think about traditional family structures and roles and to begin viewing families as spaces that promote the health and wellbeing of individual family members in accordance with their human rights. The four lines of work of the platform are: (1) facilitating interdisciplinary academic dialogues; (2) supporting community initiatives at the grassroots level; (3) engaging in a communications strategy that changes the current narrative; and (4) advocating policy reform at national, regional, and global levels.

In the spring of 2020, the Healthy Families Initiative launched an interdisciplinary academic project on respectful maternity care. In countries around the world, many women experience harmful practices when accessing health services related to pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care, including abuse, neglect, disrespect, discrimination, and, in some cases, violence. The project will include a virtual workshop during the spring of 2021, where experts from a variety of disciplines and countries will address the challenges associated with effectively preventing and redressing harmful practices during maternity care, both in theory and in practice. These experts—both scholars and practitioners—will exchange best practices, share lessons learned, and discuss the experiences of their respective disciplines and countries. In advance of the workshop, the team will produce a report that considers the limitations of criminal law to prevent and redress these harmful practices and an editorial on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected access to respectful maternity care around the world, both from international human rights perspectives.

The Healthy Families Initiative also drafted a brief for a case against Chile before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The case is expected to shape Inter-American caselaw related to state parties’ obligations to regulate and monitor the behavior of health insurance companies, as well as the limits of justiciability of the right to health under the Chilean constitution and in judicial practice.

THE RITSHIDZE PROJECT

In South Africa, Global Health Policy and Politics Director Matthew Kavanagh and Associate Laura Norato helped launch the Ritshidze community-led monitoring project, led by the Treatment Action Campaign and partners. The Ritshideze Project brings together South Africa’s leading organizations of people living with HIV to collect data from communities about the quality of public sector HIV and healthcare services. Community members who use public healthcare services collect data through regular interviews and focus groups with staff and clients. The Global Health Politics and Policy team works alongside civil society leaders to support analysis of the data, and use of the information to identify solutions and advocate for improvements in the health system at the local, provincial, and national level.

UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima
BUILDING CAPACITY

CONFRONTING THE CHALLENGE OF NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES

In February 2020, the Healthy Families Initiative launched a new Global Center for Legal Innovation on Food Environments, funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, under the leadership of Director Oscar Cabrera. This academic center seeks to bridge the disconnect between academic research and applied work on healthy food law and policy, amplifying the impact of both. In order to achieve this goal, the center works in three areas: (1) systematizing, generating, and disseminating knowledge on healthy food law and policy; (2) building capacity to further strengthen the work being done in the field; and (3) providing technical assistance to practitioners throughout the world. In other words, the center is a transnational venue for research, publication, education, training, and technical assistance on legal and policy aspects of diet-related risk factors of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). The center focuses particularly on six countries: Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico, and South Africa.

This spring, the center joined with scholars from West Indies University to begin research on legal standards, and opportunities to promote the adoption of regulatory measures that reduce diet-related NCD risk factors through the Caribbean Court of Justice. They also began work on a book to address legal and policy arguments around the use of commercial speech by industries that contribute to the burden of NCDs. The center is pursuing publications on the role of the food and beverage industry during the COVID-19 pandemic, links between environmental law and health law, food and beverage sponsorship of sporting events, and the development of a casebook on the commercial determinants of health.

In order to build professional capacity in food law, the center has begun partnerships and collaborations with law schools and scholars from Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Jamaica, Mexico, and South Africa.

THE LAW OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

The Law of International Development Initiative (LIDI) was launched in Fall 2019 by Distinguished Development Diplomat in Residence Susan Pascocello. LIDI is a unique public-private partnership between the USAID and the O’Neill Institute, and develops dynamic solutions to legal challenges arising from the delivery of development and humanitarian assistance to the world’s most vulnerable. In 2020, LIDI developed partnerships with top AmLaw 50 law firms to connect law students to practitioners in the field of international development and provide opportunities for legal support to enterprises in the developing world. Additionally, building on USAID’s Action Action Alliance for Preventing Sexual Misconduct (AAPSM), LIDI focuses on legal issues relating to sexual misconduct in the international aid sector. LIDI is also developing best practices for ensuring allegations and instances of sexual misconduct are thoroughly investigated and that adequate measures are taken to prevent perpetrators from circulating among aid organizations. LIDI aims to increase opportunities for meaningful engagement between students and practitioners.

SUPPORTING HEALTH OFFICIALS

In February 2020, the Association of State and Territory Health Officials (ASTHO) and the O’Neill Institute welcomed Vice Admiral Jerome M. Adams, surgeon general of the United States, to the third annual “Leading In Government” workshop, held on the law campus. Over 30 leading state health officials attended the 2020 gathering. This partnership works to support sound public health policy and ensure excellence in state-based public health practice.
HEALTH LAW PROGRAMS

“THE LL.M HELPED ME UNDERSTAND THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LAW, MAKING ME A MORE EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE AGAINST VIOLATIONS OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS, SUCH AS FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.”

MARIA JURUA-KISUMBI
GHL ALUMNA ’14

With a focus on developing the next generation of leaders in health law, the Health Law LL.M. program trains lawyers to apply their specialized legal skills to improve population health. Created in 2007, the Health Law LL.M. program is a major component of O'Neill’s mission to advance the role of law in improving health outcomes in the United States and throughout the world. The program advances students’ knowledge and skills through focused studies in core law and policy courses on global health governance, infectious diseases and the law, noncommunicable diseases and the law, health and human rights, trade law and health, bioethics, food and drug law, biotechnology, and intellectual property law and health.

The Health Law LL.M. program offers a range of degrees and certificate programs, including an LL.M. in National and Global Health Law, certificates in Food and Drug Law and U.S. Health Law, an MPH/LL.M. with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and an LL.M. in Global Health Law and Governance with the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland.

This year, O'Neill celebrated the graduation of 19 students from Argentina, Chile, China, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Puerto Rico, Uganda, and the United States. “I am immensely proud of our 2020 graduates for their extraordinary resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite great challenges, they made exceptional contributions to the O’Neill Institute, Georgetown Law, and the Graduate Institute, including as research assistants, journal editors, and interns at organizations in Washington, DC and Geneva.” said O’Neill’s Director of Health Law Programs Sarah Roache. Extracurricular programing included private sector and public interest career panels, visits to the Pan American Health Organization’s Regional Committee Meeting and the World Bank’s Law and Development Conference, and an annual fall brunch and hike with Professor Lawrence Gostin.

The class of 2020 showed extraordinary resilience and commitment as it transitioned to a virtual learning environment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and 2020 graduates will take their expertise to a variety of organizations, including health and human rights advocacy groups, health care and regulatory practice, and judicial clerkships.

INSTITUTE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

The O’Neill Institute’s Postgraduate Fellowship is a key component of O’Neill’s commitment to building capacity and leadership in global health law. The O’Neill Fellowship is a one-year, full-time program for early-career health lawyers. Fellows are an integral part of the O’Neill Institute’s team, contributing to both scholarly and project-based work. In summer 2019, O’Neill welcomed two fellows, Margherita Cina and Lidiya Teklemariam. Katherine Ginsbach and Landon Myers joined O’Neill in 2020 as Institute Fellows working with the Global Health Politics and Policy, Addiction and Public Policy, and Infectious Disease Initiatives, and providing critical support to the COVID-19 Law Lab.

INSTITUTE INTERNSHIPS

Through its internship program, O’Neill aims to offer law students from across the United States and around the world meaningful exposure to national and global health law issues. In summer 2020, O’Neill welcomed 14 full-time interns, who worked across O’Neill’s six initiatives, contributing to research and scholarship on topics ranging from access to treatment for people with substance use disorders, to analyzing the efficacy of policy interventions to combat HIV. Interns also contribute to the O’Neill Institute expert column, participate in workshops on health law career opportunities, meet health law practitioners, and improve their presentation skills.
DEFINING THE FIELD

THE LANCET-O’NEILL COMMISSION ON GLOBAL HEALTH AND THE LAW

After the Lancet-O’Neill Commission on Global Health and the Law’s report, “The Legal Determinants of Health: Harnessing the Power of Law for Global Health and Sustainable Development” in May 2019, and the launch of the Legal Solutions Network alongside the United Nations General Assembly, O’Neill joined with global partners to increase the visibility of the commission’s report and identify the most effective ways to use the law to improve health outcomes around the world. The O’Neill Institute supported launch events in London, Bristol, Edinburgh and Geneva, and several more planned events in Asia, Latin America and Africa were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In London, O’Neill partnered with Chatham House, the Lancet, and the Center for Transnational Legal Studies to welcome keynote speaker Lady Hale of Richmond, the president of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom, who highlighted the power of the law to encourage healthy living and to discourage unhealthy living by “nudging people in the right direction.” Richard Horton, editor in chief of the Lancet, also moderated a panel of legal and health experts on the successes of and barriers to employing law to improve health outcomes.

In Bristol, keynote speaker Sarah Hawkes, director of the Centre for Gender and Global Health and professor of global public health at University College London, spoke on the power of law to shape health and moderated a panel of health experts from the University of Bristol Law School. The discussion covered health inequities, and how social structures and the legal determinants of health compound those inequities.

In winter 2020, the O’Neill Institute partnered with the Usher Institute at the University of Edinburgh and welcomed keynote speaker Peter Mathieson, principal and vice chancellor of the University of Edinburgh. Panelists highlighted how law is crucial for protecting the health and the well-being of society, and demonstrated how law can be a powerful tool to advance global health.

In Geneva, five members of the commission were joined by leaders from UNAIDS, the NCD Alliance, the WHO, and the International Commission of Jurists to discuss the report’s findings on the immense power of the law to advance the right to health. They also demonstrated how the law is currently being used around the world to strengthen health systems and to improve health outcomes. The discussions focused on the role of law in achieving universal health coverage, criminal law as a barrier to accessing health care, governance, and cross-sectoral collaboration.

GEORGETOWN LAW JOURNAL SYMPOSIUM

In fall 2019, the Georgetown Law Journal hosted its biennial symposium with the theme, “Law and the Nation’s Health,” in collaboration with the O’Neill Institute. This timely and important topic was chosen both to address an issue central to the United States’ political climate, and to celebrate the work of Georgetown University Law Center Professor and O’Neill Faculty Director Lawrence Gostin. The symposium brought together important and influential scholars of national and global health law and was organized around three key themes: the law of women’s health and equity, the law of universal health coverage, and the state of global health law. The symposium offered a forum for Georgetown University staff and students, scholars and practitioners of health law, and legislators and regulators to make a critical assessment of global and national health law, particularly as it plays into broader domestic and international debates on health care policy and legislation.

HIV POLICY LAB

The HIV Policy Lab is working to track, measure, and visualize the HIV-related law and policy environment in 194 countries around the world. The science of HIV has advanced rapidly in recent years, but the translation of that science into policy often lags far behind. Too often, policy is not rigorously evaluated to understand what works, and what doesn’t. The HIV Policy Lab turns laws and policies into data and uses that data for research and accountability. In partnership with UNAIDS and the Global Network of People Living With HIV, the project will launch formally in September of 2020.
CROSS CAMPUS AT GEORGETOWN

A CONVERSATION WITH DR. ANTHONY FAUCI

In July 2020, the O'Neill Institute hosted a student town hall with Dr. Anthony Fauci, in partnership with the Institute of Politics and Public Service at the McCourt School of Public Policy (GU Politics), Georgetown’s Global Health Initiative, and the Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor. In discussion with O’Neill Senior Scholar John Monahan and GU Politics Executive Director Mo Elleithee, Dr. Fauci touched on the evolving dynamics of the pandemic and government advice, as well as how he navigates the complicated politics of the Trump administration. O’Neill Health Law LL.M. student Alanoud Alsulaiman introduced the conversation.

The event was widely covered by every major media network, including the New York Times, the Washington Post, NBC, CNN, Reuters, and the Wall Street Journal.

HIGHLIGHTS OF CLASSES AND ADJUNCTS


PARTNERING ACROSS CAMPUS

The O’Neill Institute is committed to working with health and global health experts and organizations across Georgetown. This year, O’Neill partnered with the Health Justice Alliance, the Georgetown Climate Center, the Georgetown Law Journal, the Center for Transnational Legal Studies, the Kennedy Institute of Ethics, and many other groups at Georgetown University Law Center. These collaborations enrich O’Neill’s work and grow Georgetown’s reputation as a vibrant center for global health law.
CENTER FOR INNOVATION IN GLOBAL HEALTH

THE CENTER FOR INNOVATION IN GLOBAL HEALTH (CIGH) works with government, civil society, and experts around the world to develop innovative public health solutions and support their translation into policy and scale. This requires not only inclusive problem-solving that elevates local voices and expertise to move beyond surface solutions to address structural inequities, but multi-disciplinary engagement with policymakers, scientists, and legal experts to ensure sustainable impact at scale.

In 2020, under the leadership of Center Director Dr. Charles Holmes, CIGH expanded its footprint to the O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University Law Center. Creating a bridge between the Georgetown University Medical Center and the law campus, this partnership allows for the robust engagement of Georgetown Law faculty around the translation of global health innovations into effective health policies and laws.

The CIGH Policy and Law Initiative will develop novel approaches for improving the effectiveness of local governance for public health—from facilitating enhanced data use, to strengthening local government structures in order to support local leadership of public health responses. CIGH’s cornerstone program, developed with the government and National AIDS Commission of Malawi and launched in May 2020, catalyzes a health systems approach to HIV prevention that systematically increases the performance of local government, civil society, and community-based organizations to deliver critical elements of the HIV response, and embeds key functions within local systems for sustained performance. Ultimately, the program will strengthen common elements of the health system needed to combat HIV infection, support pandemic preparedness and contribute to universal health coverage.

The initiative also tackles emerging global questions such as the intersection of digital health innovations with personal privacy, and legal and regulatory issues around the introduction of new therapeutics and vaccines. Pairing developers and innovators of new technologies with global legal and ethics experts allows for robust discussion that can inform both local decision-makers and global organizations.

CIGH Policy and Law initiative seeks to promote better public health solutions that not only provide tools to fight epidemics more strategically and save more lives, but also can be institutionalized for successful local ownership and long-lasting impact.

“THIS UNIQUE COLLABORATION BETWEEN LAW AND MEDICINE WILL NOT ONLY PROMOTE PUBLIC HEALTH SOLUTIONS THAT ALLOW US TO FIGHT EPIDEMICS SMARTER AND SAVE MORE LIVES, BUT ALSO CREATE SOLUTIONS THAT CAN BE INSTITUTIONALIZED FOR SUCCESSFUL LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND LONG-LASTING IMPACT”
DR. CHARLES HOLMES
O’NEILL INSTITUTE STAFF

AS OF AUGUST 1, 2020

Jennifer Alexander, Operations Manager, Health Law Programs
Sara Allinder, Associate Director, Center for Global Health Innovation
Isabel Barbosa, Associate, Healthy Families Initiative
Sean Bland, Senior Associate, Infectious Disease Initiatives
Sonia Canzater, Senior Associate, Infectious Disease Initiatives
Anna Carter, Associate Director, Center for Global Health Innovation
Margherita Cinà, Fellow
Andrés Constantin, Associate, Healthy Families Initiative
Jeffrey S. Crowley, Director, Infectious Disease Initiatives
Kate Daley, Program Coordinator, Global Health Policy and Politics Initiative
Lauren Dueske, Director of Strategic Communications
Eric Friedman, Global Health Justice Scholar
Ivonne Garza, Associate, Healthy Families Initiative
Katherine Ginsbach, Fellow
Lawrence Gostin, Faculty Director
Katie Gottschalk, Executive Director
Charles Holmes, Director, Center for Global Health Innovation
Matthew Kavanagh, Director, Global Health Policy and Politics Initiative
Regina LaBelle, Director, Addiction and Public Policy Initiative
Landon Myers, Fellow
Laura Norato, Associate, Global Health Policy and Politics Initiative
Susan Pascoe, Director, Law of International Development Initiative
Mara Pillinger, Associate, Global Health Policy and Politics Initiative
Rebecca Reingold, Associate Director, Healthy Families Initiative
Sarah Roache, Director, Health Law Programs
Fernanda Rodríguez-Piñero, Junior Associate, Healthy Families Initiative
María Belén Saavedra, Associate, Healthy Families Initiative
Silvia Serrano Guzmán, Associate Director, Healthy Families Initiative
Renu Singh, Fellow, Global Health Policy and Politics Initiative
Cynthia Sun, Communications and Events Coordinator
Felix Swierski, Institute Program Coordinator
Nick Townsend, Program Coordinator, Healthy Families Initiative
Abigail Ulman, Program Coordinator, Center for Global Health Innovation
Shelly Weizman, Associate Director, Addiction and Public Policy Initiative
Sarah Wetter, Fellow
Emily Wilkinson, Manager of Finance and Administration

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