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Introduction the Inaugural Journal by IHPP

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Introduction the Inaugural Journal by IHPP

It is an honor to introduce the first issue of the online journal *Health Policy & Politics*, published by the Institute of Health Policy and Politics, a key research unit within the College of Health at Lehigh University, directed by Professor Eduardo J. Gómez. Like the journal, the College of Health at Lehigh University is relatively new, having opened in 2020 in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. No event in my lifetime has better demonstrated the profound influence of politics on health policy, and thus on health outcomes of people across the globe. It is fitting, then, that both the Institute and the journal of *Health Policy & Politics* examine the effects of politics and policy on human health.

The mission of the College of Health is to improve outcomes for populations, communities, and individuals through research, teaching, and service. Much of our faculty research focuses on upstream causes of health and disease—the multiple determinants of health—including the political determinants of health. And, experiential learning, including research with faculty is a core feature of our teaching. In keeping with this last point, each essay in the inaugural issue of *Health Policy & Politics* represents a collaboration between a faculty researcher and student author, or, in one case, a former student who is now himself a professor. Impressively, the journal itself is edited by a team of student editors.

The essays address the impact of policy and politics on health outcomes worldwide over the last thirty years. Michael Gusmano and Cheryl Qin analyze the effect of 2009 healthcare reform in China on access, the workforce, quality of services, and more. Xiaohui Guo, Chad Meyerhoefer, and Lizhong Peng examine elementary and middle school students' health and academic outcomes related to enrollment in Pennsylvania's Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Sameen Basha highlights the failure of governments around the world to make lasting changes that will enable healthcare workers to provide effective care. And, Eduardo J. Gomez and Lanie Fenster point to a particular failure; they diagnose a public health side effect of COVID-19 pandemic policy as an increase in obesity rates—and offer concrete policy actions to mitigate this failure.

I hope you will join me in celebrating and learning from the inaugural edition of *Health Policy & Politics*.

Professor Elizabeth Dolan
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