UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF LAW

Mary and Philip Seeman
Health Law, Policy and Ethics Seminar Series

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19 VACCINE MANDATES: WHY THEY MAY CAUSE MORE HARM THAN GOOD

Thursday, March 31, 2022 | 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Speakers:
- Kevin Bardosh, PhD, Affiliate Assistant Professor, School of Public Health, University of Washington
- Stefan Baral, MD, MPH, Professor, Department of Epidemiology, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health
- Rachel Gur-Arie, PhD, Hecht-Levi Fellow, Berman Institute of Bioethics, Johns Hopkins University
- Trudo Lemmens, LLM (bioethics), DCL, Scholl Chair in Health Law and Policy, Faculty of Law and Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto

Commentators:
- Alison Thompson, PhD, Associate Professor, Leslie Dan Faculty of Pharmacy and Dalla Lana School of Public Health, University of Toronto
- Bill Bogart, LLB, LLM, Distinguished Professor of Law, Windsor University Faculty of Law
- Peter Doshi, PhD, Associate Professor, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy

Vaccination policies have shifted dramatically during COVID-19 with the rapid emergence of population-wide vaccine mandates, domestic vaccine passports, and differential restrictions based on vaccination status. These policies have prompted ethical, scientific, practical, and political controversy; however, there has been limited evaluation of their unintended consequences. In this seminar, four of the authors of a widely distributed paper (https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4022798), will engage in a conversation about the main points of the paper with colleagues from public health, public health law, and pharmaceutical science.

While COVID-19 vaccines have had a profound impact on decreasing global morbidity and mortality burdens, the paper argues that many vaccine mandates, including those recently renewed by Ontario universities, are scientifically questionable, ethically problematic, and misguided. They may have detrimental long-term impacts on the uptake of future public health measures, including COVID-19 vaccines and routine immunizations. Restricting people's access to work, education, and social life based on COVID-19 vaccination status disproportionally impacts on human rights, promotes stigma and social polarization, and adversely affects health and wellbeing. Mandating vaccination is one of the most powerful interventions in public health and should be used sparingly and carefully to uphold ethical norms and trust in scientific institutions. Current COVID-19 vaccine policies should be reevaluated in light of negative consequences that may outweigh benefits. Leveraging empowering strategies based on trust and public consultation represent a more sustainable approach for protecting those at highest risk of COVID-19 morbidity and mortality and the health and wellbeing of the public.

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Advance registration required via Zoom: https://bit.ly/3Mvenst