

Ethics and pandemic policies: democracy in crisis
31st Jan 2022, 1.00pm-2.00pm (London time)

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, ethics guidance has valuably informed some health policies and practices, such as oversight of research and crisis standards of care. However it has been less effective at addressing broader questions about how we should live together in this and future pandemics. A recent report by the Hastings Center suggests that a key barrier to developing ethically informed health policies on major societal questions is the erosion of social cohesion driven by a lack of trust of both institutions and individuals. This trust deficit is a consequence of fundamental socioeconomic conditions marked by wealth inequality and widespread financial precarity, and changes to the information economy, including the rise of social media. This joint webinar hosted by Epidemic Ethics and the Hastings Center will explore the role of restoring societal decision-making capabilities, in order to rebuild trust, social cohesion and shape ethics-informed pandemic policies and responses.

To register: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/7416430194293/WN_c37yWlblQfC7J4ADfB2sfA

Chair

Mildred Z. Solomon, EdD, President, the Hastings Center

Panel

Bruce Jennings, MA, Senior Advisor, The Hastings Center, Associate Professor of Health Policy, Vanderbilt University

Eduardo J. Gómez, PhD, MA, Associate Professor and Director of the Institute for Health Policy and Politics, Lehigh University

Michael K. Gusmano, PhD, Research Scholar, The Hastings Center, and, Professor of Health Policy, Lehigh University

The following questions will form the basis of the seminar's panel discussion. Seminar attendees are invited to submit questions in advance of the seminar when they register or during the live discussion.

1. What are the features of robust democracies, and what are the warning signals we now see in the United States and in other democracies?
2. How does the erosion of democratic norms and practices undermine our ability to manage collective problems, like the pandemic and global warming?
3. What can be done to sustain democracy, rebuild trust, and enhance our collective decision making?

Background Reading

Kaebnick, Gregory E., Gusmano, Michael, Jennings, Bruce, Neuhaus, Carolyn P., Solomon, Mildred Z. (2021). [Civic Learning for a Democracy in Crisis](#). In *Democracy in Crisis: Civic Learning and the Reconstruction of Common Purpose*, ed. Gregory E. Kaebnick et al., special report, *The Hastings Center Report*, 51(1): S2-S4. DOI: 10.1002/hast.1221.

Full report here: Kaebnick, Gregory E., Gusmano, Michael, Jennings, Bruce, Neuhaus, Carolyn P., Solomon, Mildred Z. (2021). [Democracy in Crisis: Civic Learning and the Reconstruction of Common Purpose](#). *The Hastings Center Report*, 51(1). DOI: 10.1002/hast.1221.