About Us
Recognizing the gap in bioethics research and policy analysis in the vaccine field, the Penn Center for Bioethics of the University of Pennsylvania launched its Ethics of Vaccines Project in early 2005. Seed funding was received from the Penn Provost’s Interdisciplinary Seminar Fund and Penn Center for Aids Research (CFAR) http://www.uphs.upenn.edu/aids/.

A project working group of 40 was formed, drawn from across the Penn community including the School of Medicine, the Law School, Wharton, the Annenberg School, and a number of life science disciplines, as well leaders from outside Penn from the public health community, the media, collaborating faculty at Columbia and Johns Hopkins, as well as from The Wistar Institute and major vaccine makers. The working continues to meet for regular seminar meeting exploring a broad range of ethical and policy issues affecting vaccines and their public health impacts.

In late 2006, the Penn Center for Bioethics partnered with The Wistar Institute, one of the pioneers in vaccines research and development, to strengthen the project team. Wistar president and CEO Russel E. Kaufman, M.D. commented, “The Wistar Institute’s proud tradition of leadership in basic research has produced some of the most dramatically effective vaccines in history. Wistar is the perfect partner for Penn’s Center for Bioethics to produce a thoughtful and actionable ethical framework guiding the entire vaccine life cycle.”

Also in 2006, The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), the #1 ranked children’s hospital in the nation, and its Vaccines Education Center became a partner, significantly strengthening the leadership team. Dr. Paul Offit, head of Infectious Diseases at CHOP and a founding member of the project, commented, “As a number of new vaccines are entering public health and clinical practice, it is more important than ever to have clear, accurate information about vaccines and their critical role in public health. The Ethics of Vaccines Project is making an important contribution to clear thinking about vaccine policy, safety and ethical issues, and by doing so, helping parents, patients, clinicians and the public health professionals make informed choices and use vaccines more effectively.”

Leveraging three years of program development in the continuing Ethics of Vaccines Project, the Center for Bioethics, Wistar and CHOP formed The Center for Vaccines Ethics and Policy in 2008. The Center initiated a continuing series of public forums on vaccines issues with The Franklin Institute Science Museum, and launched a consulting capability on vaccine ethics and policy issues.

Governance for the Center is led by Dr. Arthur L. Caplan, Sidney D. Caplan Professor of Bioethics and Emanuel & Robert Hart Director, Center for Bioethics, University of Penn School of Medicine; Dr. Paul A. Offit, head of Infectious Diseases at CHOP, and Wistar Institute president and CEO Russel E. Kaufman, M.D. The Center’s Executive Director is David R. Curry, MS.

A project bibliography and more information available at: http://www.centerforvaccineethicsandpolicy.org/ A weekly vaccine ethics and policy update is posted at: http://centerforvaccineethicsandpolicy.wordpress.com/ Contact us by email at david.r.curry@centerforvaccineethicsandpolicy.org or by voice at (001)267.251.2305.
Vaccine Ethics and Policy Consulting
The Center for Vaccine Ethics and Policy is a joint program of the Center for Bioethics, University of Pennsylvania; The Wistar Institute Vaccine Center and The Vaccine Education Center of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Originally launched as the Ethics of Vaccines Project by Penn’s Center for Bioethics in 2005, the Center continues to inventory and analyze ethical and policy issues across the global vaccine enterprise (see attached “about us” overview).

Beginning in 2008, the Center for Vaccine Ethics and Policy began to respond to requests for ethics and policy consultation by state and local government, major NGOs in the public health sphere, vaccine makers and corporations. These consults have included ethical issues around pandemic preparedness planning; H1N1 vaccine deployment; clinical trial design for novel vaccines; informed consent issues around vaccine clinical trials and immunization campaigns; pre-licensure access to vaccines in development, and targeted market withdrawal of specific vaccine products.

These consults are typically confidential in nature but have included PATH, The Wistar Institute; the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the City of Philadelphia, Merck, Novavax, and Goldman Sachs, among others.

Approach
The Center for Vaccine Ethics and Policy has developed a practice approach to consults of this type which includes:
- rigorous analysis of the relevant medical, life sciences, policy and public health literature around the issue in question,
- aggressive outreach to the expertise in the fields involved based on an extensive network of collaborative relationships in academia, government, the NGO community, and industry to ground the engagement,
- immersion on-site with the client principals responsible for the issue,
- recommendation of appropriate strategies to address the issue ranging from new primary or secondary research; convenings of internal and/or external expertise to engage the issues (forums/retreats, etc.),
- sourcing of appropriate expertise for needed research, and logistics support for convening and management of meetings/forums, etc.
- development of white paper-level analysis of the problem and recommended strategies and actions as a principal work product of the consult,
- presentation of findings to client leadership and governance bodies as appropriate, and
- development of articles for peer-reviewed journals positioning the underlying issues involved to contribute to the field overall.

Contacts
The Center welcomes inquiries on its consulting capabilities, fees and further details. Please contact either David R Curry, MS, Executive Director of the Center at david.r.curry@centerforvaccineethicsandpolicy.org (001.267.251.2305) or Dr. Arthur L. Caplan, Director, Center for Bioethics, University of Pennsylvania caplan@mail.med.upenn.edu.

We believe the ethical imperative for vaccine policy is to accelerate the development and delivery of needed vaccines – providing safe, affordable and effective access, and producing sustained immunity, for all people at risk regardless of circumstance or geography.