



# **Roundtable II: Medical Responsibilities in Flight Speaker Biographies**

*Bioethics in Commercial Space Travel:  
Charting Humanity's Next Frontier*

**January 15, 2026  
12:00–1:30 p.m. EST  
Via Zoom**



**DR. ERIK ANTONSEN**  
**OSMED**  
*Subject Matter Expert*

Dr. Erik Antonsen's career sits at the intersection of medicine and engineering for human spaceflight. He is an Associate Physician at Massachusetts General Hospital and a faculty member at Harvard Medical School in the Space, Ecological, Arctic, and Resource-Limited (SPEAR) Medicine Division of the Department of Emergency Medicine, and a lecturer in MIT's Department of Aeronautics and Astronautics, where he co-teaches Aerospace Physiology and Life Support Systems.

Dr. Antonsen is Treasurer and Chief Technology Officer of Advancing Frontiers Inc., a consulting firm providing spaceflight integration services, an editor of *Systems Medicine for Human Spaceflight*, and President of the Organization for Space Medicine, Engineering and Design (OSMED).

His experience spans government, academia, and industry. At NASA, he served as Element Scientist for Exploration Medical Capabilities in the Human Research Program (2015–2018) and later as Assistant Director for Human System Risk Management in the Human Health and Performance Directorate at NASA Johnson Space Center (2018–2021), where he chaired the NASA Human System Risk Board and worked with human spaceflight programs to prioritize research and operational investments.

From 2013 to 2024, Dr. Antonsen was faculty at Baylor College of Medicine, achieving tenure as Associate Professor of Space Medicine and Emergency Medicine. He co-founded ADE Aerospace Consulting and ADE Medical, which supported the record-setting StratEx mission in 2014, and holds B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in aerospace engineering. He is a practicing emergency medicine physician in Boston, with research focused on advanced risk assessment for space medicine, AI in medicine, and space health systems design.



**DR. LUCAS BRANE**  
Minerva Medical  
*Discussant*

Lucas Brane, MD is the founder and CEO of Minerva Medical, a company working towards creating the medical infrastructure needed for the next phase of human spaceflight. He is fellowship trained in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Dr. Brane is a former combat medic turned scientist turned physician. He is creating the staffing framework and operational tools by which modern medicine can be most effectively applied to support the unique needs of human spaceflight.



## **DR. DANA LEVIN**

Vast Space  
*Discussant*

Dr. Dana Levin has dedicated his life to supporting human health in space and other extreme environments. He is board certified in Emergency Medicine and Aerospace Medicine and has more than a decade of experience caring for humans on all 7 continents, beneath the sea, and in space.

He currently serves as the Medical Director and Chief Flight Surgeon for Vast Space. In this role he is part of a team building the first commercial space station and developing artificial gravity systems for long term human habitation of space. Before this he worked for NASA as a Clinical Scientist for the Human Research Program developing methods to assess medical risk for deep space missions and designing the medical systems to mitigate them. He was the clinical lead for NASA's artificial intelligence clinical decision support task force.

As a terrestrial physician Dana maintains an active clinical practice in Emergency Medicine and holds faculty appointments with UC Irvine, the Massachusetts General Hospital, and Baylor College of Medicine. He has cared for patients in every clinical setting from single physician coverage rural hospitals in Wyoming to tertiary care medical centers in some of the largest US cities. He has been the field physician for high altitude expeditions, underwater archeological expeditions, research stations in Antarctica, and every environment in between.

He is also an accomplished researcher and scientist with work focused on enhancing the ability to deliver high level care in resource limited environments and developing artificial gravity systems.



**DR. SARALYN MARK**  
SolaMed Solutions  
*Moderator*

**Saralyn Mark, MD, FAMWA**, is an endocrinologist and women's health specialist and the founder and CEO of **SolaMed Solutions**, including its space medicine subsidiary. She is also the founder of **iGIANT®**, a nonprofit focused on advancing sex- and gender-specific design.

Dr. Mark has served as a medical and scientific advisor to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, NASA, and other public- and private-sector organizations. She previously served as Senior Medical Advisor to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health and to NASA, where she contributed to initiatives spanning public health, emerging technologies, and human performance in space.

She is an adjunct Associate Professor at Yale and Georgetown Universities and a Distinguished Senior Fellow at George Mason University. Dr. Mark is the author of *Stellar Medicine* and has received multiple awards for distinguished public service.



**DR. VASILIKI RAHIMZADEH**  
Baylor University College of  
Medicine  
*Ethicist*

Vasiliki Rahimzadeh, PhD, is an assistant professor of medical ethics and health policy at Baylor College of Medicine. Her National Institutes of Health-funded research program investigates the ethical, legal and social issues (ELSI) of sharing genomic and related health data on Earth and in space. She directs the Mission to Enhance Ethics Education, Outreach and Research in Space (METEORS) program where she contributes to evidence-based standards for human research protections in the commercial spaceflight industry and supports space medicine investigators navigate emerging ELSI in their work. She is also a standing member of the Bioethics Panel for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and chairs the Astro-Ethics Affinity Group through the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities. Dr. Rahimzadeh has a BS in microbial biology from the University of California Berkeley and earned a PhD with specialization in biomedical ethics from McGill University before completing a postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford University.



**MEGAN SIEFFERT, ESQ.**  
Applied Materials  
*Discussant*

Megan Sieffert is an aerospace, semiconductor, and advanced-technology attorney whose career bridges federal oversight, cutting-edge space programs, and high-growth commercial innovation. She currently serves as Segment Business Counsel at Applied Materials, guiding complex commercial, government, and technology transactions for global semiconductor and precision-manufacturing programs. Previously, she was Associate General Counsel at Vast and held senior in-house roles at Axiom Space and Slingshot Aerospace, supporting commercial space station development, astronaut missions, and national-security space software. Megan's foundation as an aerospace lawyer was forged at NASA's Office of Inspector General, where she helped safeguard federal resources by supporting investigations and oversight across NASA's Earth Science portfolio, launch services, and the Commercial Crew Program. She also maintains a robust pro bono practice advising scientific and aerospace startups at the pre-funding stage to accelerate innovation and expand access to space.



**DR. WALTER SIPES**  
Consultant  
*Discussant*

Walter Sipes, PhD is an experienced aerospace and operational psychologist who has provided several years of mental health support for individuals (US Air Force personnel, aircrew, astronauts) and their families. His own operational experience firstly as a US Army aviator include logging 500 combat flight hours in helicopters and later logging another 500 flight hours as an Air Force psychologist as the psychology Human Factors Consultant to the US Air Force Surgeon General. He has been a human factors consultant on 37 aircraft accident investigation boards. He participated in US and Canadian astronaut selection programs for 35 years and screening commercial spaceflight participants for 4 years. After he retired from the Air Force, he was a psychologist for NASA at Johnson Space Center for 15 years where he conducted training and psychological support/services for both Shuttle and ISS missions to astronauts and their families. He retired from NASA and as an independent contractor, he has had contracts with the Canadian Space Agency and Axiom Space. His research and publications have spanned topics of military pilot psychological test norms, spatial disorientation, psychological support for long-duration missions, cognitive performance in spaceflight, training ISS astronauts, and fatigue countermeasures for long duration spaceflight missions. He is currently on two international committees focused on developing medical standards for commercial passengers and on developing training standards for commercial spaceflight passengers.



**DR. KALEIGH STABENAU**  
University of California, Irvine  
*Discussant*

Kaleigh A. Stabenau, MD is an assistant professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at the University of California-Irvine. She was the inaugural graduate of the Arizona Program for Exploration (APEX) Medicine and Surgery Fellowship through the University of Arizona College of Medicine-Phoenix and currently serves in an adjunct faculty role as the assistant program director, where she focuses on robust curriculum development and curating commercial space and research experience for the fellows. Dr. Stabenau holds contracts with multiple commercial space companies, working in medical systems development, human factors, and mission operations. She served as flight surgeon on the Axiom-3 and Polaris Dawn missions and will continue serving for Fram2 and Axiom-4. Her research focuses on the risk and tradespace analyses for surgical contingencies in long-duration spaceflight and the development of training paradigms for future space surgeons. Dr. Stabenau also holds a private pilot certificate and enjoys science fiction writing and video games, which she contends teach strategy, teamwork, and resilience.



**DR. JON G. STELLER**  
University of California, Irvine  
*Discussant*

Dr. Jon G. Steller is a board-certified Obstetrician-Gynecologist and Maternal-Fetal Medicine specialist at the University of California, Irvine. He is internationally recognized for his expertise in gynecologic and reproductive health in spaceflight environments. Dr. Steller previously served for six years at NASA within the Exploration Medical Capabilities Element and the Human Standards Team in the Office of the Chief Health and Medical Officer (OCHMO). In these roles, he developed extensive expertise in systems engineering, medical modeling, probabilistic risk assessment, tradespace analysis, and the development of medical selection, recertification, and mission evaluation standards.

He currently serves as Deputy Chair of Programming for the Organization of Space Medicine, Engineering, and Design (OSMED) and as Co-Director of the UCI Space MED Program. Dr. Steller is also a member of the Vast Space Medicine team, where he provides domain leadership in systems medicine, exercise countermeasures, and women's health.



**KONRAD SZOCIK**  
University of Information  
Technology & Management  
*Ethicist*

Konrad Szocik is a philosopher and bioethicist, and professor and vice-rector for research and international cooperation at the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów, Poland. His research focuses on the philosophy, ethics, and bioethics of space exploration, human enhancement, feminist bioethics, population ethics, and selected issues at the intersection of futures studies, technology, and the environmental crisis. He is the author of *The Bioethics of Space Exploration* (Oxford University Press, 2023) and *Feminist Bioethics in Space: Gender Inequality in Space Exploration* (Oxford University Press, 2024), as well as numerous journal articles and book chapters on space ethics, space bioethics, antinatalism, and climate-related existential risk. Previously, he was a Visiting Fellow at the Yale Interdisciplinary Center for Bioethics (2021–2022).



**DR. PAUL ROOT WOLPE**  
Emory University  
*Moderator*

Paul Root Wolpe, Ph.D., is the Raymond Schinazi Distinguished Research Chair of Jewish Bioethics at Emory University and Professor of Medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry, Sociology, and Neuroscience and Behavioral Biology. After 16 years directing Emory's Center for Ethics, he is now building the university's Center for Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation (PACT). Dr. Wolpe spent 17 years as NASA's first Senior Bioethicist, shaping policies for human health in spaceflight, and served as the first National Bioethics Advisor to Planned Parenthood Federation of America. He is Past President of both the Association of Bioethics Program Directors and the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities, and is a Fellow of the Hastings Center and the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. He received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters in 2019.

A national thought leader, Dr. Wolpe's work examines the ethical, social, and ideological impact of medicine and biotechnology. A founder of neuroethics and former Editor-in-Chief of *AJOB Neuroscience*, he was named one of Trust Across America's "Top 100 Thought Leaders in Trustworthy Business Behavior" and received the 2011 World Technology Network Award in Ethics, the 2022 Tzedek Award, and the 2025 Humanitarian Award from the International Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Author of more than 150 publications and over 500 invited presentations, Dr. Wolpe has been recognized as a Faculty Row "SuperProfessor" and a Teaching Company "Superstar Teacher." His TED Talk has over two million views, and he has been featured widely in media, including *60 Minutes* and a personal profile in the *New York Times Science Times*.



**DR. MATTHEW WYNIA**  
University of Colorado  
*Ethicist*

Dr. Wynia is a clinician-researcher and leader in bioethics with a history of exploring some of the most contentious ethical issues in health care, focusing on those related to the social roles of health professionals. He is a professor of medicine and of public health at the University of Colorado, where he directs the CU Center for Bioethics and Humanities.

Prior to his current role, he spent 18 years at the American Medical Association, where he led the AMA's Institute for Ethics and Center for Patient Safety, and he was the Director of Patient and Physician Engagement for the Improving Health Outcomes team. While there, he co-founded the Commission to End Health Care Disparities and he led the Project on the History of African-Americans and the Medical Profession that, in 2008, prompted the AMA's public apology for a legacy of racial discrimination and exclusion in organized medicine. He has served on advisory boards for the US DHHS Office of Minority, the Joint Commission, the American Board of Medical Specialties, American Board of Internal Medicine, and other national medical, public health and bioethics professional organizations. At the National Academies, he currently serves on the Board on Health Sciences Policy and has served on multiple consensus committees and chaired special projects on team-based care, transdisciplinary professionalism, and public health approaches to preventing ideologically-motivated violence.



**LAURIE ZOLOTH**  
University of Chicago  
*Ethicist*

Professor Laurie Zoloth holds the Margaret E. Burton Chair of Religion and Ethics at the University of Chicago. She has a distinguished career as a bioethicist and scholar of Jewish ethics, writing or editing 10 books, and over 350 articles. She was both President of the American Academy of Religion and President of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities, receiving its Distinguished Service Award in 2007. She was a co-founder of the Society for Jewish Ethics and founding chair of the HHMI Bioethics Board. She served on the NASA National Advisory Council, for which she received the NASA National Public Service Award. She has served as both the dean of the Divinity School and as Senior Advisory on Social Ethics at the University of Chicago. Her honors include the Graduate Theological Union's alumna of the year, an honorary doctorate from the American Jewish University, the Engelhardt Award in Bioethics and the Borsch-Rast Book Award in Religion. She is a Fellow of the Hastings Center and a Life Member of Clare Hall, University of Cambridge. In addition to her 1999 book about justice and health care policy, The Ethics of Encounter, and five edited books, her most recent books (2022-2023) are Second Texts and Second Opinions: Essays toward a Jewish Bioethics and Ethics for the Coming Storm: Climate Change and Jewish Thought, both from Oxford University Press, and May We Make the World?: Gene Drives, Malaria, and the Future of Nature, from MIT.