

# Statement on the Clinical Use of Human Germline Genome Editing

November 2, 2019

## ***The Tennessee Center for Bioethics & Culture responds to the Public Call for Evidence for the International Commission\* on the Clinical Use of Human Germline Genome Editing***

### **Given that**

According to the canons of research on children, experiments are only ethically justified when there are clear benefits to that individual child and proportional burdens to that child. Risks and burdens beyond truly “minimal” to individual children are not justified to benefit other children. To do so is to treat one child as a means to another child’s ends (i.e., to instrumentalize that child).

### **Whereas**

- Human germline genome editing is experimentation on embryonic humans who cannot give consent, informed or otherwise
- Human germline genome editing converts embryonic humans from progeny into experimental subjects, not only through gestation, but for all their reproductive lives
- Human germline genome editing converts not only one generation, but also all succeeding generations into experimental subjects
- Human germline genome editing allows some humans to fashion other humans after their own desires
- Errors occur in any production, and this reality extends to laboratories in which human embryos are manipulated

### **The Tennessee Center for Bioethics & Culture concludes**

Human germline genome editing constitutes human experimentation without consent, and as such is capable of producing grave harm – for generations to come.

Moreover, human germline genome editing is unjust, producing inequalities:

- A few humans will have unprecedented influence over future generations
- Resulting generations will be monitored in ways not deemed necessary for previous generations, or necessary for their contemporaries not born through the same mechanism(s)

If scientists engage in human germline genome editing, mistakes will be made, and human beings will bear those errors. Humanity possesses no means of compensating for such harm, and the destruction or killing of human beings so harmed – at whatever stage of life they may be – would be a wholly inappropriate response.

*\*U.S. National Academy of Medicine (NAM), the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (NAS), and the Royal Society of the U.K.*

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