



A DUE PROCESS FOR BIOETHICS

Citation

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Abstract

With the sequencing of the human genome, biomedical science has entered what is likely to be an era of remarkable progress. This progress will bring tremendous improvements to human life, but it also raises difficult ethical questions. Many of these questions are ones on which reasonable people can, and do, differ. The public outcry over recent events, from the cloning of Dolly the sheep to the debate over embryonic stem cell research, demonstrates how divisive bioethical issues can be.

As biotechnology continues to advance at a rapid pace, the need to address bioethical issues in a proactive, thoughtful way is more urgent than ever before. This paper proposes a permanent government institution, called the Agency for the Genetic Technologies Community (AGTC), which would be dedicated to this purpose. It is designed to facilitate the formulation and implementation of consensus-based bioethics policies. Although regulating biotechnology will be very challenging, establishing a process for the development of bioethics policy is a critical first step toward doing so successfully.