

“Modernization”, “Re-balancing” and “States of Exception”: the Multi-Pronged Attack on Fundamental Patient Autonomy Rights

Consumer Summary

Fundamental patient rights are being undermined by a new “rights discourse” that sees public health through the lens of national security. This “securitization make-over” of health and patient rights uses the same rhetorical tactics used to justify the erosion of citizen rights post 9/11. The language of “re-balancing” rights masks an erosion of rights. Viewing health through the twin lens of national security (*i.e.* conflating natural occurring infections with bioterrorism) and the “knowledge economy” (*i.e.* commercialization of medical research and patient data) promotes a social control and surveillance model over a patients’ rights model. This shift is particularly important in the context of forced vaccination and other coercive actions that can be undertaken in the name of curtailing infectious diseases. The ‘biosecurity’ perspective must be opposed because it is “priming the world for public health panics and laying the foundation for the unnecessary restriction of human rights” (Parmet 2009).