



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

KALSMAN INSTITUTE
on Judaism & Health

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Kalsman Institute Roundtable on Judaism and Health Research 2009-2011

The “Kalsman Institute Roundtable on Judaism and Health Research” is a two-year project whose ultimate goal is to establish a scholarly field around the topic of Judaism and health. The project will be housed at the Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health (KIJH), a department of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. The project’s primary investigator (PI) is Michele F. Prince, Director of KIJH, and the Co-PI is Dr. Jeff Levin, who starting this fall is University Professor of Epidemiology and Population Health and Director of the Program on Religion and Population Health at Baylor University.

The project aims to solidify and institutionalize a new field of scholarship and research around the topic of Judaism, health, and healing. These include establishing a research foundation for the Jewish healing movement; promoting study of illness, wellness, and healing in Jewish populations; establishing formal standards for evaluative research on health-related services, resources, and care provided by Jewish congregations and organizations; and, creating an enduring professional community of Jewish scholars, scientists, and practitioners who will research the interconnections of Judaism and health.

The centerpiece of the project is convening the Roundtable—an ongoing think-tank-style cohort of between one and two dozen academic and professional leaders of North American Judaism. Activities and products envisioned for the Roundtable are identifying research priorities for this emerging scholarly field; publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals, as well as other scholarly products, in order to disseminate results of Roundtable discussions; catalyzing an emphasis on applied research and evaluation; and building and strengthening a leadership network for this field. The primary audience for the project’s products is the academic community in the fields of Jewish studies and Jewish religious scholarship, and the larger spirituality and health field.

A long list of activities and products is envisioned which will fulfill the project’s objectives. These are the first four:

- 1) A comprehensive survey and assessment of existing resources, writing, and congregational and communal programming in Judaism, health, and healing;
- 2) Constituting a core advisory team and holding its first meeting, Nov. 2009;
- 3) Inviting Roundtable participants to a planning meeting, Jan. 2011; and,
- 4) Publishing the first of several articles: “Judaism, Health, and Healing: How a New Jewish Communal Field Took Root and Where it Might Grow,” *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, v. 84, n. 3, Summer 2009; and “Judaism and Health: Sketches of an Emerging Scholarly Field,” under review at *Journal of Religion and Health*.