When Professor John D. Blum joined Loyola's law school in 1986 to teach health law, the field was much more limited than it is now. “When people talked about health law in the mid-1980s, they really thought about a couple things,” said Blum, the John J. Waldron Research Professor at the Loyola University Chicago School of Law.

Medical malpractice and bioethics were the two main subjects that dominated the field of health law, Blum said.

Blum said the growth of the health law field at Loyola is evident from the school's decision to create an endowed Beazley Chair in Health Law and Policy. Blum has been named as the inaugural chair, which was established to honor the late Bernard and Kathleen Beazley.

Bernard was a 1950 Loyola law graduate who spent his legal career working for the American Dental Association and later for dental products manufacturer Dentsply International. He served on Loyola's board of trustees before his death in 2011.

“I think it’s a recognition on the part of the university that this is a specialty area that is important to the law school and that it really represents a culmination of many years of activity, over 30 years of activity, that the law school has been involved in, in what is a fairly new field of the law,” Blum said.

“What we’ve seen in health law is this tremendous explosion of regulation and it’s this regulatory trajectory that’s really moved health law into a number of different directions that were not nearly evident or strong in the mid 1980s.”

Loyola Law School Dean Michael J. Kaufman said in a statement that Blum is a pioneer in health law, and “has led Loyola to national prominence in this ever-evolving and important field.”

“We could not be more pleased to name him as our inaugural Beazley Chair in Health Law and Policy, which honors two of our school’s most dedicated supporters,” Kaufman said.

Prior to coming to Loyola, Blum was a health policy researcher at Boston University and then joined the faculty at Pennsylvania State University where he taught in the Department of Health Policy.

Blum is the founding editor of Loyola’s student-run Annals of Health Law and Life Sciences and has held leadership positions in numerous health law organizations, including the American Health Lawyers Association, American Bar Association Health Law Section, American Public Health Association and Illinois Association of Healthcare Attorneys.

As the inaugural Beazley Chair in Health Law and Policy, Blum said he hopes to focus his research on three broad areas: long-term care, the healthcare workforce and public health approaches to problems, like natural disasters or pandemics.

“We are in a period of great uncertainty about the healthcare delivery system,” Blum said. “We are going to see some changes, we don’t know if they will be sooner or later, but clearly this is a focal point for many disciplines, including the law.”