Welcome from the Director

This has been an exciting and successful semester in the Health Justice Project. The law students, social work students and medical providers worked hard to overcome the social and legal issues that prevent long-term health and stability for their low-income clients. The semester also underscored the fact that medical-legal partnership is a perfect vehicle for teaching law students, particularly health law students, about the fundamentals of practice and the importance of collaboration in their careers.

As the Fall Snapshot and Health Justice By the Numbers (page 2) describe, students worked hand in hand with doctors and social workers to address socioeconomic determinants of health that result in repeated, and perhaps preventable, readmissions and other challenges to the delivery of care. The students used their legal skills to provide assistance to over 75 patients of Erie Family Health Center.

Typically, many providers lack the resources to address socioeconomic determinants of health. We have learned that it takes another skill set, lawyering, to do so effectively. This emphasis on interdisciplinary analysis of the social issues underlying health inequalities is helping to move the medical model from a singular focus on the remedy for disease toward a holistic, patient-centered problem solving approach.

We are grateful to our partners and our colleagues at Loyola and in the Beazley Institute for Health Law and Policy. Without your support and valuable contributions this important work would not be possible.

Emily

Emily A. Benfer
Clinical Professor of Law
Health Justice in Action: Fall Snapshot

This fall, the Health Justice Project students (Client Advocates and Student Attorneys) assisted over 75 patient-clients. Among the success stories is Graciella’s case:

Graciella’s disability prevented her from holding a steady job and made it difficult for her to pay rent. Her landlord threatened her with eviction and took the law into his own hands. After reviewing Graciella’s rental agreement and notices of termination, Health Justice Project students discovered multiple violations of Chicago’s Residential Landlord Tenant Ordinance. What was once a bleak situation, with Graciella owing the landlord upwards of $2,800.00 and facing immediate homelessness, was quickly reversed. A settlement agreement was reached, reducing Graciella’s debt to $0, awarding her $1,200.00 in damages, and giving her an extra 39 rent-free days in the apartment.

On November 1, 2011, Graciella vacated the apartment on her own terms. The Health Justice Project Social Work team is currently working to secure her safe and affordable housing, as well as public benefits. On November 11, 2011, Graciella began working at a new job that will provide her with reasonable accommodations.

(Names have been changed.)

Other Health Justices Project successes include:

- **Patrick Keenan Devlin, 3L**, prevented ComEd from unlawfully shutting off his client’s utilities. To ensure that others are not subjected to similar actions, he submitted public comments to the Illinois Commerce Commission on proposed regulations. His letter to the editor on the subject was published in the *Daily Herald* on Dec. 6, 2011.

- **Courtney Lane, 3L**, represented a family living in harmful conditions that resulted in lead poisoning, respiratory distress and other ailments for the parents and children. Courtney successfully negotiated with the landlord and defending against a retaliatory eviction, which allowed the family to leave the harmful environment while retaining their security deposit. Courtney also positioned the family to bring a tort claim against the landlord.

- **Bryant Cameron Webb, 3L**, successfully appealed the Department of Human Services’ refusal to transfer a client to another office. The client suffered health problems including high blood pressure and anxiety related to the stress of the DHS office. Cameron also submitted comments to the Housing and Urban Development and Health and Human Services Environmental Justice Strategies.

Health Justice By the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>409</th>
<th>Patient-referrals from Erie Family Health Center received by Health Justice Project has received since December 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Law, Social Work and Public Health students participated in the Health Justice Project Fall 2011 Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1,379,778.00</td>
<td>Attorney fees that the services of the students, volunteers, and staff of the Health Justice Project would have totaled for the Spring 2011 Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$26,529.25</td>
<td>Medical expenses reimbursed to Erie Family Health Center after HJP won a client’s Medicaid denial appeal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Student Attorney comments on government rule-making Fall 2011 Semester. Comments were made to HUD, ICC, and HHS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Special education cases the Health Justice Project has referred to our partner Equip for Equality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When Allyson Gold was growing up in a suburb outside of Washington, D.C., her mother wanted to make sure that her children did not grow up unexposed to the realities that many people in the surrounding communities faced. During holiday parties for low-income children that Gold hosted with her Girl Scout troop, she learned that where you live has a tremendous effect on quality of life. Gold thought, “I live just twenty minutes from here, and these other children have experienced so many difficulties that I have never even had to think about.”

Gold brings a wealth of housing law and MLP experience to the Health Justice Project. Gold has focused her time, energy and career on the effect of housing and environment on an individual’s health and quality of life. During her undergraduate education at the University of Virginia, Gold became more engaged in the study of race, poverty, opportunity and privilege. Her honors thesis analyzed the federal Housing Opportunities for People Everywhere program (HOPE VI) as a mechanism to promote affordable housing and sustainable communities. After her undergraduate career, Gold began working as a tenant advocate at Housing Counseling Services in Washington D.C. Gold then attended Emory University School of Law — choosing to attend law school after recognizing the scarcity of attorneys dedicated to defending the rights of low-income persons and the lack of resources facing public interest lawyers. “The ability to vindicate your rights under the law should not depend on your ability to pay for representation; I am a lawyer to make sure that is true,” stated Gold.

Gold began working with the Health Justice Project in August 2011 and has already made meaningful contributions and become asset to the team. Gold oversees all patient-referrals from Erie and supervises the Client Advocates. “I relish the opportunity to work with students who care about these issues and to have the opportunity to foster their public service interest,” remarks Gold. She is ready to take on policy efforts during spring semester and expand the influence of the Health Justice Project.

As an adjunct professor at Loyola University Chicago School of Law, Gold will be co-teaching a class entitled “US Housing Law and Policy” with Mark Swartz, Legal Director at the Lawyers’ Committee for Better Housing during the spring semester. The class examines the historical role of the government as an active agent in creating devastating housing disparities and analyzes legal mechanisms to promote safe, decent and affordable housing. Gold was selected to present at the National Medical-Legal Partnership Summit this spring.

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Fall 2011 Semester Take-Aways

At the end of the Fall 2011 semester, the students enrolled in the Health Justice Project, Introduction to Health Justice, Interdisciplinary Health Advocacy and Advanced Health Justice to reflect upon the semester. The students’ “take-aways” include:

- Be your best self; your best attorney.
- The client makes the decision. Your job is to make sure it’s informed.
- Realizing how scary it is to have a legal problem and how it deteriorates health.
- The law is an important tool and we have a special responsibility.
- All you can do is the best you can do.
- Always encourage and empower the client.
- Success does not equal winning.
- Celebrate all victories, especially the small ones.
- The best approach is a non-judgmental one in which you look at your mistakes and grow from them.
- We evolve. We can determine the type of attorney and person we want to be.
- Importance of reflection.
- Don’t give up! You always have something to offer.
- Every tiny bit you do makes a difference.
- A great support system helps you support others.
- How powerful it is to bring a group of motivated people together.
- Clinics are an incredible experience.
Bryant Cameron Webb, Student Attorney

Bryant Cameron Webb is a 3L student who is completing his coursework in the Fall 2011 semester. In the spring, he will return to Wake Forest School of Medicine to complete his fourth year of medical school--finishing his seven-year dual degree program in May of 2013. The source of his inspiration to seek professional education in both medicine and law was derived from a “Public Health Ethics and Law” class he took in his third year as an undergraduate at the University of Virginia. In this class, he was first introduced to the crucial roles that both law and policy have in improving health of communities.

During his time with the Health Justice Project, Cameron gained a new perspective on the impact of social determinants of health on vulnerable communities. By using the law to advocate for justice on behalf of these individuals, Cameron felt he was able to “truly appreciate how unfair and preventable the adverse social conditions impacting health could be.”

After finishing residency in internal medicine, Cameron plans to bring together his health care and health law backgrounds to develop and implement equitable and effective health policies. He looks forward to a career as a champion for underserved and distressed communities across the

"HJP is my opportunity to fight for social justice, to be a social engineer, and to be a part of a group that is passionately dedicated to improving lives and preserving health. In between the classes and books, HJP is a reminder of what I’m here to achieve."

-- Bryant Cameron Webb

Cynthia Herrera, Client Advocate

Cynthia Herrera is a 2L student originally from Toledo, Ohio. She is the Co-President of the Immigrants’ Rights Coalition at Loyola as well as a board member of both the Latino Law Student Association and the National Lawyers Guild.

This summer, Herrera held two internships: one at the Immigrant Child Advocacy Project where she served as a Child Advocate for children in detention centers and the other as a Legal Intern with the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

During the Fall 2011 semester in the Health Justice Project, she successfully advocated for a client, securing social security benefits and retrograde-paid medical bills. She conducted numerous client interviews and successfully assisted in several housing conditions cases. According to Health Justice Project staff, Cynthia “became an outstanding legal advocate over the course of the semester and will make important contributions to the field of poverty law.” Herrera strives to “positively affect

"Participating in the Health Justice Project has provided me personal and professional growth. I feel empowered by the achievements I have had here and the experience has compelled me to pursue a Health Law Certificate and continue in the field of health law."

-- Cynthia Herrera
Public Benefits Enrollment
Please refer any patients who have yet to apply for “Food Stamps,” cash benefits or a medical card to Legal Assistance Foundation Paralegal, Michaela Muresan. Michaela will be available in the lobby of Erie Humboldt Park Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9am-5pm and Wednesday from 1:30-5pm through December. (Both Spanish and English available)

Learn More About Building Foreclosure
The Health Justice Project’s Allyson Gold co-presents with Mark Swartz, Legal Director of LCBH, the “Chicago Apartment Building Foreclosures: Impact on Tenants.” Watch this free presentation available online at http://www.illinoisprobono.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.dsp_content&contentID=7603

I-HEAL Guide
The I-HEAL Guide provides information about your patients’ rights to benefits and other services. The Guide is now available on the web at www.luc.edu/healthjustice.

Prevent Utility Shut Off
No one can be denied essential utility services between December 1st and March 31st (winter months). If a household includes a person with a serious illness or a newborn and is low-income, the family is protected from shut-off for up to 60 days at any time of year.

Doctors play a vital role in prevention. Please contact the Health Justice Project if you identify the potential for utility shut off.

No Evictions Allowed
Tenants cannot be evicted between December 25th and January 1st or during inclement weather. Please contact the Health Justice Project if you identify a potential eviction.

Trainings Available for Specialty Groups
Please contact the Health Justice Project at healthjustice@luc.edu for trainings in any of the I-HEAL topics or for questions about referrals.

Refer Patients to Overcome Social Determinants of Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Area</th>
<th>Social History Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I: Income Assistance and Insurance (Public Benefits and SSI/SSDI, Charity Care, Medicaid) | Do you ever have trouble making ends meet?  
Do you ever have a time when you don’t have enough food?  
Do you have WIC? Food Stamps?                                                                                                                   |
| H: Housing and Tenant Rights (Conditions, Evictions, Utilities)                           | Is housing ever a problem for you? Have you noticed signs of infestations or mold?  
Do you ever have trouble paying the electric or heating bill?  
Is your child acting lethargic or having trouble breathing?  
Are you having trouble with your landlord?  
Are you having trouble paying the rent?                                                                                                             |
| E: Education (Enrollment, Special Education)                                            | How is your child doing in school? Is he/she getting the help to learn what he/she needs?  
Is your child in Head Start, Preschool or any other early childhood program?  
Does your child feel safe at school?  
Are you a pregnant or parenting teen?                                                                                                               |
| A: Advocacy and Appeals (Benefit Denials)                                               | Were you recently denied public benefits, disability benefits, or medical card?                                                                                                                                   |
| L: Legal Referrals                                                                     | Do you feel safe in your relationship? Do you have questions about your immigration status?                                                                                                                       |
Announcements

Thank you to the Illinois Bar Foundation for your generous support of the Health Justice Project!

Looking for Summer Credit? The Health Justice Project is accepting applications from current 1L and 2L students for Student Attorney and Client Advocate positions for the summer 2012 session. Email the Health Justice Project at healthjusticeproject@luc.edu if interested.

Welcome New Partner: AIDS Legal Council of Chicago. AIDS Legal Council of Chicago will be working with patients of Erie Family Health Center’s Lending Hands for Life Program. Approximately, 1600 patients participate in the program and require legal assistance. The Health Justice Project partners with members of the medical, social work, public health and legal professions, including Erie Family Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center that serves 36,000 patients annually at 11 locations in Chicago; Equip for Equality; Lawyers Committee for Better Housing; Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work; Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine.

Congratulations to Shannon Flaherty, 2L, for a job well done in her first semester as the Clinic’s Health Law Fellow. Thank you, Shannon!

Externship Opportunity on Foreclosure
The Lawyers’ Committee for Better Housing meets with tenants facing eviction or other problems resulting from living in a building in foreclosure on the 14th floor of the Daley Center. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Please contact healthjustice@luc.edu.

Welcome New RAs, Giorie Mahn & Rachelle Sico!

Study on the Effect of Medical-Legal Partnership on Patient Health
Masters in Public Health student Bridget Garrity will be conducting an empirical analysis of the effect on medical-legal partnership on patient health during a practicum placement with the Health Justice Project in Spring 2012. Thank you, Bee, for your volunteer efforts during Fall 2011!

Save the Date: January 20, 2012 is Orientation/Boot Camp for Spring semester.

Thank you to our Fall 2011 Students!

Megan Brady  Patrick Keenan Devlin  Margaret O’Donoghue
Chelsea Borgeson  Courtney Lane  Elizabeth Piekarz
Alex Dembitz  Erin Lau  Jessica Sanchez
Aleh Gathings  Ilissa Lazar  Bryant Cameron Webb
Cynthia Herrera  Jennifer Lorio  Nicole Zylstra
Justin McDevitt

“You open one door, and they open ten or twenty doors for you. You keep hope alive. I’m grateful for all that you do.”

- Health Justice Project Client