Welcome from the Director
Emily A. Benfer, Clinical Professor of Law

This issue focuses on the importance of interprofessional collaboration in response to the urgent health needs facing our society. With the passage of the Affordable Care Act, the fields of health and law are moving from a single perspective approach to a cooperative, holistic, and integrated approach to public health. This practice is best demonstrated by the work of the Health Justice Project, a medical-legal partnership that integrates law students into the healthcare team.

In the Health Justice Project, our students gain the skills necessary to provide high-quality, comprehensive services that address the social and legal underpinnings of patient health. The importance of the students’ work in the community is evident in Health Justice Project Success and By the Numbers (page 2). These outcomes would not be possible without our medical champions at Erie Family Health Center. We are delighted to spotlight a few of these outstanding providers (page 4).

Our experience partnering with the medical field has made it clear that interprofessional team-based care is central to advancing healthcare and improving individual and public health. Interprofessional competence is a critical skill in today’s marketplace. With this in mind, one of our goals is to train students to effectively collaborate with diverse disciplines. This year, we took interprofessional collaboration to a new level!

During the 2013-2014 school year, the Health Justice Project partnered with Loyola’s Stritch School of Medicine to launch the first cross-listed experiential course at the law school. Senior students of public health, medicine and law enrolled in the law school’s Health Justice Policy course represent national and local non-profits (ChangeLab Solutions, Fall 2013, and Healthy Homes/Health Communities Initiative, Spring 2014). As members of an interprofessional team, the students work together to develop innovative policy approaches that support access to health for low-income individuals. We couldn’t be more pleased with the outcome of the inaugural semester or the accomplishments of our students (page 3).

Thank you for your continued support of the Health Justice Project and for helping to make health justice a reality.
Michelle* recalls her 12 year old son running into the kitchen. “Mom, I got a surprise for you!” Tyson* said, as he pulled the Student of the Month Award from his backpack.

“I was so proud of him.” Michelle beamed sharing the story.

Tyson’s award was no small achievement, and not something mother or son could have imagined six months earlier. Tyson has severe learning disabilities and the family of three faced significant challenges over the past year.

The apartment the family lived in for over a year was unsafe due to an unresponsive management company. The property was infested with pests and the appliances often malfunctioned. Michelle tried asking her landlord for assistance fixing the dangerous problems, but instead of making repairs, he threatened to evict her.

For Michelle, the stress of the situation snowballed into severe depression and made it more difficult for her to care for Robert, her adult son with disabilities. It intensified Tyson’s learning disabilities and caused him to regress at school.

The Health Justice Project law students immediately jumped to action. They defended against an eviction and recouped over $2500 in housing expenses for the family. The Health Justice Project also restored the family’s SNAP benefits, ensuring they could afford healthy food.

When Michelle talks about where her family is six months later, she says they are thriving. Tyson is doing better at school, Robert’s health has improved and he is working again, and her depression is well-managed. All of this was possible with the simple necessity of housing.

“Just knowing and working with programs like [the Health Justice Project] is magic. I needed you. There is help out there.”

*Patient-client names have been changed.

During a visit with her doctor at Erie Family Health Center, Michelle described her housing problems, her attempts to fix the issue, and the toll it was taking on her family.

Fortunately, the doctor knew the best course of treatment for the family. He told Michelle about the medical-legal partnership with the Health Justice Project. When the doctor described the legal services offered right at the health center, Michelle was enthusiastic about the idea.

“I felt safe with the Health Justice Project. I knew someone had my back. I just felt calmer knowing you all represented me,” Michelle recounts.

The Health Justice Project by the Numbers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Law, Medical, and Public Health students participated in the Health Justice Project in Fall 2013</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient referrals from Erie Family Health Center received by the Health Justice Project since December 2010</td>
<td>1364</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical providers, advocates, and patients trained by the Health Justice Project on the social determinants of health and resources in Fall 2013</td>
<td>703</td>
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<tr>
<td>Value of pro bono hours donated by Health Justice Project students and attorneys in Fall 2013</td>
<td>$330,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partners and collaborators who work with the Health Justice Project to improve community health outcomes</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I-HEAL Guides distributed in the community to support the work of legal and health services providers</td>
<td>686</td>
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“I couldn’t sleep in the old apartment because there were so many roaches. Now I can lay in bed and not worry. The Health Justice Project helped me get through the storm.” - Michelle, Former Health Justice Project Client
Christine Moyer, 2nd Year MPH Student

Christine Moyer served as a policy advocate in the Health Justice Policy course and represented ChangeLab Solutions during the Fall 2013 semester. Prior to graduate school, she worked behind the scenes as a public health journalist, bringing health issues into the spotlight through her writing. Giving a voice to the voiceless, she worked to raise awareness on health issues that were often overlooked by the medical field. Christine, however, wanted to get more involved in addressing public health matters and decided to pursue a Master of Public Health. While working with ChangeLab Solutions, Christine conducted a Community Needs Assessment (CNA) of Chicagoland. The CNA revealed the grim reality of health inequity in Chicago and provided critical data to support the team’s policy proposal. Christine was surprised by the gap in data available for many key health indicators. The project was a memorable and rewarding experience for Christine and she hopes that her work on behalf of ChangeLab Solutions will encourage future CNAs on the micro-neighborhood level to obtain a more accurate picture of the social determinants of health in the poorest parts of the city.

Leighanne Root, 2nd Year Law Student

As a client advocate in the Introduction to Health Justice course, Leighanne Root understands the importance of good health. “When we lack what we require to stay healthy, little else matters; it all becomes irrelevant.” Unfortunately, the social and legal issues that become irrelevant and ignored are often the underlying causes of poor health outcomes. Understanding this, she couldn’t pass up the opportunity to be a part of the Health Justice Project, a medical-legal partnership “that uses the law to address the source of health problems, targeting the underlying legal and social issues affecting the health of clients.” As a client advocate, Leighanne spent a significant amount of time listening to clients’ stories. Initially, she was surprised by the number of clients who didn’t know that there were remedies for the problems negatively impacting their health. The time Leighanne spent speaking with clients served as a reminder of the unequal distribution of information and how that inequality can affect health. “The opportunity to help clients resolve problems they didn’t know could be remedied, and knowing that [my] work made a difference in someone’s life was the best part of [my] involvement with the Health Justice Project.”

Ashley Badger, 3rd Year Medical Student

Ashley Badger has “always believed that everyone should be able to pursue what they’re passionate about and, in order to do that, it’s critical for them to have and maintain their good health.” Her decision to study medicine stems from her passion to serve underserved populations. She feels very strongly that “someone’s socioeconomic status and geographic location should not be a barrier to them receiving the absolute best healthcare possible.” With limited interaction with people outside of the medical field, the Health Justice Project was the perfect opportunity for Ashley to learn and work with professionals from other disciplines who share the same goal of improving community health outcomes. Ashley was eager to learn more about the process of policy development that affects patients and served as a policy advocate and medical expert in the Health Justice Policy course. She found inspiration in seeing how “passionately the students from all schools worked toward making this project a success.”

“Train interprofessional leaders: Students across graduate programs collaborate to improve patient health”

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- Christine Moyer, Policy Advocate

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“The Health Justice Policy course was a great demonstration of how attorneys and public health officials fight for the rights of their clients and communities just as intensely as physicians work for the health of patients.”

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- Ashley Badger, Policy Advocate
Erie Family Health Center serves as the medical partner in the Health Justice Project medical-legal partnership. Erie providers recognize the importance of addressing the needs of the whole patient, including the social and legal circumstances that cause poor health outcomes. Here’s what a few of the medical champions had to say about their practice and the importance of the medical-legal partnership to their patients’ health.

Q: WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO PRACTICE PRIMARY CARE?

Dr. Frescas: I believe that primary care is the foundation of maintaining the wellbeing of a patient. Primary care focuses on prevention and allows the provider to foster a relationship with the patient as well as their family and the community.

Dr. Shah: I saw the same social injustice over and over again throughout my medical training and recognized a dire need to pull people out of the water farther upstream and prevent health crises.

Dr. Schwab: As a pediatrician, I am in the unique position to watch a child grow and help a family through illness, through health, and through many difficult, as well as, joyful circumstances. It is a very special role, to be part of so many important aspects of a family’s life.

Q: WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF HAVING A LEGAL TEAM AT ERIE?

Dr. Frescas: I am grateful that medical care doesn’t have to stop at what happens inside the clinic. The collaboration with the Health Justice Project allows us to work together to help patients navigate the social structure to healthier lives.

Dr. Shah: Patients don’t always trust lawyers but they do trust their doctors and the dynamic allows the two professionals to work together to advocate for the patient. The collaboration eases the pressure to be the sole advocate for the patients.

Nurse Sontag: I recently saw a patient that I had referred to the Health Justice Project. The family was extremely thankful for the Health Justice Project’s services. Having a legal team in Erie is an incredible resource to comprehensive care. I have long envisioned having social services under one roof and the collaboration with the Health Justice Project is a step toward that vision.

Dr. Schwab: Having the ability to provide the most up to date medical care and resources to help patients live the fullest life has been the best part of the job.

Q: WHAT IS THE BEST PART OF PRACTICING PRIMARY CARE?

Dr. Shah: I appreciate Erie’s effort to have community members work at Erie. I am constantly inspired by my colleagues and the patients.

Nurse Sontag: I was drawn to Erie because of the
Chicago recently topped Orkin’s list of bed bug outbreaks nationwide. Bed bugs can cause sleeplessness, fatigue, unsightly bites, and infections. To combat this epidemic, the Chicago City Council enacted a new Bed Bug Ordinance. The Bed Bug Ordinance went into effect on December 22, 2013. The ordinance, which is the first of its kind in the U.S., requires landlords and tenants to work together to eradicate a bed bug infestation in all surrounding units where bed bugs have been found. As soon as a tenant suspects s/he has bed bugs, s/he must notify his/her landlord in writing of the suspected infestation. The landlord must then inspect and, if the landlord finds bed bugs, hire a professional to eradicate the infestation and inspect all surrounding units until the bed bugs are completely eradicated. Any person who is found to have violated the ordinance can be fined $300–$1,000 PER DAY for each offense.

Please refer your patient to the Health Justice Project through the internal referral system in the EMR if you identify a patient with a possible bed bug infestation. If you have questions, call the Health Justice Project at 1.800.424.4839 or email: healthjustice@luc.edu.

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<tr>
<th>LANDLORD</th>
<th>TENANT</th>
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<td>To comply with the law, landlords must:</td>
<td>To comply with the law, tenants must:</td>
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**Before a known infestation:**
- Supply a brochure about bedbugs with the lease

**After a known infestation:**
- Provide pest control services by a pest management professional
- Send a written notice to the tenant explaining their responsibilities prior to the extermination
- Maintain record of bed bug control efforts
- Inspect and treat surrounding units

**After identifying an infestation:**
- Notify the landlord *in writing* of any suspected infestation in the tenant’s unit
- Dispose of bedding, clothing, furnishing, and other infested materials by placing them in a plastic bag that is labeled “infested”
- Cooperate with the landlord in remediying the bed bug infestation, which means:
  - Allow landlord to come into apartment at reasonable times, with notice, for inspections and treatments
  - Prepare unit for treatment, including cleaning and vacuuming
  - Dispose of personal property that cannot be treated

**RESOURCES FOR PROVIDERS:**

*Chicago City Council Enacts New Bed Bug Ordinance*
The Health Justice Project welcomes **Ashley Park** as our inaugural AmeriCorps VISTA Fellow. Ashley earned her MPH from the University of Illinois Chicago and focuses on cultural determinants of health.

The Health Justice Project welcomes Professor **Dhrubajyoti (Dru) Bhattacharya**, JD, MPH, LLM. Dru, who is the Director of Public Health Policy and Management at the Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine, co-teaches the Health Justice Policy seminar.

**Emily Benfer, Dru Bhattacharya, and Allyson Gold** were invited to the Illinois Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission on Medical-Legal Partnership.

The National Law Journal named **Emily Benfer** one of Chicago’s Top 40 Lawyers under 40.

**Allyson Gold** was appointed to the Advisory Board of Healthy Minds, Healthy Children, Healthy Chicago (H3), an initiative between Erie Family Health Center and Community Counseling Centers of Chicago (C4).

**Allyson Gold** analyzed the insufficiency of current law for low-income tenants in poor housing conditions in her presentation, *Escaping the Trap of Unhealthy Housing: Remedies for Tenants in Substandard Housing*, at the Midwest Regional Healthy Housing Conference and at the National Poverty Law Conference.

**Emily Benfer** presented her research, *Health Justice: An Equity Approach to the Elimination of Health Disparities Among Low-Income and Minority Populations*, at the National Poverty Law Conference.

**Emily Benfer** discussed the importance of multidisciplinary education in her article, *Educating the Next Generation of Health Law Leaders: Medical-Legal Partnership and Interdisciplinary Graduate Education*, published in the Journal of Legal Medicine.

Thank you to **Erin Sutton**, our Student Fellow, and **Paige Steffen**, our Research Assistant, for all of their fantastic work this semester!

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**THANK YOU TO OUR FALL 2013 STUDENTS**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ashley Badger</th>
<th>Deborah Moldover</th>
<th>Jonathan Sheffield</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily Coffey</td>
<td>Christine Moyer</td>
<td>Paige Steffen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily Hardy</td>
<td>Leighanne Root</td>
<td>Erin Sutton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Harig</td>
<td>Andrea Reino</td>
<td>Benjamin VanGelderan</td>
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“I am so thankful that my doctor sent me to you. I would be nowhere, without a medical card or food stamps without the Health Justice Project”

- Former Health Justice Project Client