

August 9, 2012

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
Building II, Suite 204
Midlothian, VA 23112

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Thank you so much for supporting my work this summer at the Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP). I have learned an immense amount about Medicaid and how its administration affects low-income Pennsylvanians. Working with PHLP has allowed me to hone my skills in the areas of direct client work and statutory interpretation, while strengthening my commitment to pursuing a career in public interest health law.

At PHLP, I performed substantive work including direct client counseling, health policy research, and drafting fact sheets for Medicaid consumers. I was happily surprised to find that I would be doing actual legal work that would positively affect the lives of Pennsylvanians in need.

Every week I was assigned one shift answering calls to PHLP's Helpline. Medicaid consumers call the Helpline for help with benefits issues including Medicaid denials and terminations, accessing services, and Medicaid enrollment. With the help of a PHLP staff member, I would return consumer's calls and help them with their Medicaid issues. Determining eligibility for the various Medicaid programs offered by the state is very complicated, and I would often determine which programs a caller was eligible for and help them with the application process. Additionally, I called County Assistance Offices on behalf of clients who had their Medicaid terminated, often without notice, or who were unable to access specific services. Mid-summer, many County Assistance Offices implemented new computer systems that were accidentally terminating Medicaid coverage. These new computer systems also made it impossible for caseworkers to turn coverage back on. On one case, I worked closely with an ombudsman to restart coverage for a client with severe medical problems. Another case involved getting coverage of a client's chemotherapy medication by working with the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) and the client's chemotherapy provider. Working with clients made it clear to me how convoluted the Medicaid system is and how difficult it can be for consumers (and advocates) to understand. Most callers to the Helpline were sick and uninsured, and I appreciated the opportunity to help these callers in need get the health care they deserved.

Another large part of my PHLP fellowship was evaluating the legality of proposed changes to Medicaid procedures and regulations, as well as interpreting existing legislation. This involved the reading of federal and state Medicaid statutes as well as recently enacted bills and proposed changes outlined in operations memorandums and the budget. I drafted a memo evaluating the temporal limitation on reduced regulatory requirements for the Department of Public Welfare during fiscal year 2011—2012. I also evaluated the effect of a Social Security Administration disability evaluation on subsequent applications to Pennsylvania Medicaid programs. These assignments and others like it forced me to hone the statutory interpretation skills I learned through a Legislation class I took in the Spring of my 1L year.

One particularly insightful experience involved traveling to Harrisburg, where I sat in on a meeting of the Medicaid Assistance Advisory Committee (MAAC). The MAAC is composed of consumers, advocates, providers, managed care organizations (MCOs), medical centers, and members of the Department of Public Welfare. Sitting in on the MAAC meeting provided a view into how medical coverage affects every single component of the health care system. The consumers present at the meeting were well informed, both through personal experience and interaction with people in their communities. It was great to see that the opinions and suggestions of the consumers were not ignored by the providers and MCO representatives present.

My summer at PHLP was an extremely valuable experience. I have learned so much about Medicaid, the legislative process, and working with clients. Working with PHLP has confirmed my commitment to a career in health law serving low-income populations. I want to express my gratitude to Equal Justice America for the support it gives to students doing meaningful work at public interest organizations.

Sincerely,
Justine Haimi
University of Pennsylvania Law School, Class of 2014

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August 14, 2012

Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America
13540 East Boundary Road
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Re: **Justine Haimi**
Summer Internship Evaluation

Dear Mr. Ruben,

Funded by the generous support of Equal Justice America, Justine Haimi recently finished her ten weeks as a law student summer intern with the Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP). As a legal intern, Justine proved quite capable, and her manifold contributions to the program are already missed. PHLP was fortunate to have a summer intern of Justine's quality, and we thank Equal Justice American for the financial support that allowed her to pursue public interest work.

Pennsylvania Health Law Project (PHLP) is a non-profit legal services organization, headquartered in Philadelphia, that works to reform and improve the public health care system. Our legal staff helps low income people cut through legal, administrative or financial barriers to obtaining needed health care treatment. PHLP also informs, trains, and supports Medicaid and Medicare consumers (and those who serve consumers) on health issues, engages in policy analysis, and promotes health care innovations focused on quality and accessibility.

Justine's primary responsibility during the summer was interviewing, counseling, and representing individual clients regarding public insurance programs, such as Medicaid and CHIP. Following a series of substantive trainings, she quickly became proficient in the complexities of Medicaid. With only a moderate amount of supervision, Justine over the course of the summer counseled dozens of individual clients on how to establish eligibility for Medicaid coverage and how to access services once on Medicaid, among other things. Whether dealing with individual clients or welfare department caseworkers, Justine handled herself with complete professionalism.

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Helping People In Need Get the Health Care They Deserve

That professionalism extended to the legal research tasks Justine undertook. Encompassing a range of topics that spanned from the Pennsylvania's regulatory rulemaking process to Medicaid coverage of services provided to children in school, Justine's legal research memos were always

thoroughly researched and clearly written. Even for tasks requiring quick turnaround, Justine submitted thorough and polished results.

As mentioned above, we miss her already. Justine was a joy to supervise, and a tremendous asset to the program. We thank you again for the support provided through the Equal Justice America fellowship.

Sincerely,

/s/

Kyle Fisher
Staff Attorney