

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

My Summer 2017 fellowship experience at ABC for Health, Inc., a nonprofit public interest firm, was extremely rewarding and would not have been possible without Equal Justice America's generous fellowship award. I developed legal research and writing skills while simultaneously increasing my ability to provide efficient, thorough, and personalized service to clients. My daily tasks varied from numerous phone calls and meetings with advocates, attorneys, and clients to writing and proofreading sections of legal memoranda for clients who wished to appeal health insurance denials. I also worked on various policy projects, as well as writing newsletter articles and filming videos to broadcast the relevance and impact of current events.

I helped around 20 individuals who are low-income, at risk, or have special needs. I can honestly say that the clients I worked with were among the most appreciative individuals I have ever had the pleasure to work with. Many of our clients had good cases, and just needed some guidance and reassurance. One client needed an extension on verification documents for her Social Security Insurance request but was nervous to call. I called Social Security with the client via a three-way call and got her an extension. I merely introduced myself and the client and was there for moral support, but the client thanked me endlessly for being on the line with her. I worked with a handful of other clients in similar situations, and learned how to be a confident advocate for others.

Even when clients' specific issues were out of target for ABC for Health, our clients were grateful that we took the time to provide them with one or many of the resources on ABC's resource database. I received a phone call from an individual seeking help with expungement and housing, and although ABC was unable to help with either of those topics directly, I provided him with phone numbers and resources who could. We exchanged a few more phone calls and he thanked me for taking the time to listen to him and take him seriously. Interning at ABC for Health taught me the importance of active listening and how to inquire further into an individual's story to see where we could help either directly or indirectly, even if at first glance they appeared to be out of target.

The most powerful moment I had with a client was during a fair hearing I attended with an attorney from ABC. The client needed Medicaid to cover her health needs and the needs of the two special needs children she had adopted. The client was appealing a Medicaid denial because the agency was counting funds she was receiving from her father's will as unearned income. According to the BadgerCare and Medicaid handbooks, these funds should not have counted as unearned income. Our client was smart, and with the help of two attorneys at ABC for Health, she wrote up a letter arguing her case, which she presented at the fair hearing.

Though the Administrative Law Judge denied her appeal, the attorneys are currently working on a further appeal.

At the end of the fair hearing, she turned to the attorney and said, “I can’t thank you enough. I would not have had the confidence to be here or to argue my case so articulately without your help and without your presence.” That moment reminded me of exactly why I want to be a lawyer: to fight for what’s right, to analyze and use the law to help others, and to be a voice for those whose voices often go unheard.

Sincerely,

/s/ Julia Walsh

University of Wisconsin Law School, 2019



August 21, 2017

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

RE: Evaluation of Julia Walsh

Dear Dan-

As the Chief Operating Officer and a public interest attorney at ABC for Health, Inc., it has been my great pleasure to become more acquainted with Julia Walsh. Julia joined our non-profit public interest law firm as a summer student legal intern. Our staff is comprised of attorneys, Health Benefits Counselors, and advocates who focus exclusively on legal rights and responsibilities in health care financing. Julia was a quick study on some of the basics of health care coverage across the spectrum of coverage programs, and very quickly became an accountable, self-sufficient member of our team.

When Julia arrived, we established a workplan for her summer that contained three objectives: 1. Assist our Health Benefits Counseling and legal staff working directly with our clients, assisting with intake interviews while distilling and assessing the key variables in their health care coverage questions; 2. Assist ABC for Health Attorneys in community-academic partnership watchdog function over the Blue Cross Blue Shield Conversion fund in Wisconsin; and 3. Become familiar with the issue of Birth Cost Recovery (recovering lying in costs from unmarried partners of women receiving Medicaid benefits by county child support offices).

In fulfilling her workplan objectives, Julia proved herself to be organized, confident, and professional. She displayed an ability to efficiently interpret and relay concepts of health coverage and health policy. Throughout the summer, she became more confident in client conversations and more adept at tracking client conversations in our secure database. She attended meetings of the conversion fund operating board and reported back on key discussion points. She drafted comprehensive memos on her birth cost recovery policy project. She also helped draft short articles for our bi-monthly newsletter for a distribution list of over 4,500 health care professionals, and even filmed a few short, educational webinars on health care coverage topics. By the end of her summer with us, Julia achieved all her workplan objectives.

Julia joined us with a desire to experience the patient side of health law, and get an introduction to the policy issues behind the law. I believe she will continue to prioritize patient advocacy issues throughout her education and into her career. I anticipate she will thrive in an environment that allows individual advocacy for clients, coupled with issue advocacy, supporting systemic



changes or policies that advance the interests of underserved populations. Around our offices, she greeted staff, students, and clients with the same respect and attention as she did her superiors, with sincerity and interest. I would evaluate this past summer for Julia as a success!

Please don't hesitate to contact me for additional comments.

Best,

Brynne McBride

Brynne McBride
Chief Operating Officer/Public Interest Attorney
ABC for Health, Inc.