

August 2, 2012

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

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I want to thank you and your organization for awarding me a fellowship to work at for the Pennsylvania Health Law Project. My experience this summer was truly wonderful.

As an intern with PHLP, I quickly went through a total immersion training process to learn about all of the public assistance programs available in the state of Pennsylvania. This included learning about eligibility guidelines, appeal processes, rights of the consumer, etc. By week two of my internship I was answering calls on our state-wide helpline, interviewing clients, and giving supervised legal advice.

Over the course of the summer I worked with over one hundred clients. Client Advocacy has always been a passion, but it was not until I was able to hear the relief in a client's voice, that I realized how important it is to the individual. In one instance I had a mother who had two young children that were uninsured. After a lengthy interview with her, I realized that the children's medical assistance had been discontinued due to an error in the system. Together we called the County Assistance Office, followed by a call to the Department of Welfare in Harrisburg, where we explained the situation. After some persistence on my part, including citing the Medicaid Eligibility Handbook as well as federal law, the benefits were reinstated.

It was only after the call that I realized how important this was to the mother. She explained that her son had been splitting his pills in order to make them last longer and that she had went without a phone so she could afford to pay her son's costly medication. Without our help she was facing losing her electric or even worse, her housing. This problem was solvable with a little research and perseverance.

I've been very fortunate my entire life to be surrounded by people that were able to advocate on my behalf. However, in the complicated, complex world we live in, it's impossible to expect individuals to have the know-how to navigate every system, or every area of society. For these

reasons public interest groups are so important, yet they are understaffed, underfunded, and lack the resources needed to help everyone.

While everyone at the PHLP wishes to help every person that needs our help there are realistic constraints that prevent us from taking every case that crosses our door. While we work hard to answer as many calls as possible and provide the best quality advice, the reality is that there are not enough resources. I was very happy to join the group this summer and I believe I made a difference. While I wasn't able to serve an infinite number of clients, I directly worked with over 100 people that otherwise might not have received the legal advice or representation they needed. I went out to the community and attended trainings where my organization provided training to over 300 advocates about their patients' legal rights.

Interning with PHLP confirmed that I very much wish to pursue a career in public interest after graduation. I thank you again for the funds that helped make this internship possible.

Sincerely,

Allison Dowling
University of Pittsburgh School of Law
2013

PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH LAW PROJECT

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August 28, 2012

Dan Ruben, Executive Director
Equal Justice America
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13540 East Boundary Road
Midlothian, VA 23112

Re: Allison Dowling

Dear Mr. Ruben,

I am writing to report on Ms. Dowling's summer internship with this office, which was funded by your organization. PHLP is a non-profit, public interest law firm whose mission is to assist low income families, persons with disabilities, and the elderly across Pennsylvania access health care coverage and services through the government-sponsored health insurance programs.

Allison worked with us from May 14th through August 7th 2012 and she was an impressive intern from the start. Her work with us was primarily focused in two areas. First, she worked on our Helpline-the 800# that clients call to access our services. She interviewed clients, conducted legal research into their problems, and gave them advice as well as brief representation to help them access the public health coverage and services they needed. She was also responsible for entering information and updating client files in our client database system. Many of those who call us are uneducated or low functioning, and most are unsophisticated about accessing government programs. Allison was exceptionally good with clients and displayed patience and compassion as she interviewed them and very competently helped them with their problems. She learned quickly and was very good at asking for direction, yet was able to work well without ongoing supervision.

The second project she worked on was arranging trainings and presentations in rural parts of our state for staff to train consumers, advocates and health care professionals about the upcoming mandatory Medicaid managed care system that was coming their way. Allison did a great job making contacts, educating individuals over the phone about the upcoming changes, and helping

to find locations for the events. She also helped develop the Power Point we used and worked on consumer education materials that we distributed at these events. She was well-organized, reliable and showed initiative and creativity in the work that she did.

Allison was a wonderful addition to our staff and we miss her. Like many non-profits we are short-staffed these days, yet we have an increasing demand for our services. We would not have been able to do all the good work we have done this Summer without her valuable contributions. Thank you for making it possible for her to work with us. We are very grateful for the support of organizations like yours!

Very truly yours,

M. Francesca Chervenak
Senior Attorney