



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

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EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	New York Legal Justice Group

Final Reflection:

This summer, I had the incredible opportunity to intern with the New York Legal Assistance Group in their Evelyn Frank Legal Resources Program (“EFLRP”) which works to support healthcare access for seniors and New Yorkers.

My journey with EFLRP began last October with the Equal Justice Works Virtual Public Interest Fair. As a law student interested in healthcare law, EFLRP immediately piqued my interests. Furthermore, this work is personal to me as my dad had a rare autoimmune disorder called chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy (“CIDP”). As a result of his illness, he spent the last decade of his life homebound—later bedbound—and reliant on the care of Nurse’s Aides. Even years later, I still remember just how difficult it was to obtain this vital care. This experience is what inspired me to go to law school. As a result, this internship felt incredibly full circle and I saw much of own experiences reflected in the clients that I served.

Yet, despite my personal familiarity with the pitfalls of the American healthcare system, my time with EFLRP was still eye-opening as it marked the first time that I was able to approach the topic of healthcare access from not only a professional point of view—rather than from that of a family member—but also on a systemic level. Something that I found surprising was that even the most involved and proactive clients largely struggled to understand the basics of their own care plans. For example, during intake, we would often receive a deluge of paperwork from prospective clients—this was actually preferable than going back and forth—and it would be up to us to piece together what services they received from which providers. Overall, I found this to be incredibly disheartening as the time it took to figure out their services ultimately delayed access to care and prolonged suffering.

The United States healthcare system is a complex beast made up of intricate rules and bureaucracy



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that the majority Americans are ill-equipped to grapple with on a good day. If you have chronic pain and need long term care, it is even more difficult to navigate. Still, it is my fundamental belief that all people deserve access to adequate healthcare services. Ultimately, this experience further exposed me to the systemic failures of our current system and have inspired me to continue to pursue this work going forward. I enjoyed this work so much that I have even decided to return in September through Cardozo's externship program! I am incredibly excited to see what comes next!

I want to thank everyone who has been a part of this journey. From the staff members of EFLRP who welcomed me with open arms, to Equal Justice America for supporting me throughout this endeavor, and to everyone who has followed my journey throughout the summer whether it be through a donation or reading these updates. Thank you all! I could not have done it without you!