



EQUAL JUSTICE AMERICA

Summer 2026

EJA FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT



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ORGANIZATION	Univ. of Michigan Pediatric Advocacy Clinic

Update 1: I am excited to share my first update as an Equal Justice America Fellow, currently serving as a student attorney at Michigan Law's Pediatric Advocacy Clinic.

Since beginning the placement two weeks ago, I have been assigned to clients whose matters involve Medicaid appeals, state fair hearings, and the administrative frameworks governing community behavioral health services.

This week, I represented a young child in western Michigan whose access to essential behavioral health services had been terminated. Working alongside my clinical professor, I conducted my first hearing on his behalf, presenting the legal and factual basis for restoring his services.

Cases like this one underscore the critical role that legal aid organizations and student clinics play in ensuring that individuals and families can meaningfully access the rights and services available to them. I am grateful for the support of the Equal Justice America Fellowship in making this work possible.

Update 2: Continuing my work this summer as an Equal Justice America Fellow and student attorney at Michigan Law's Pediatric Advocacy Clinic, I am pleased to share an update on a matter I am currently handling.

I am representing a family whose home has been affected by a persistent cockroach infestation, a condition that poses direct health risks to their children and has gone unaddressed by the property owner despite repeated requests for repairs. Working alongside my clinical professor, I am seeking emergency relief to secure temporary housing for the family while the necessary repairs are completed.



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As part of this matter, I am drafting my first temporary restraining order to be filed in circuit court. This has been a valuable opportunity to apply what I have learned in the classroom to a live matter with immediate consequences for a family's health and safety, and to understand firsthand how emergency motion practice functions to protect clients who cannot afford to wait for standard timelines.

This case reflects the broader mission of the Pediatric Advocacy Clinic: ensuring that families have access to safe and habitable housing, and that legal remedies are available and accessible when that safety is compromised. I remain grateful for the mentorship of my clinical professor and for the support of the Equal Justice America Fellowship, which makes this work possible. For those who wish to support this kind of work, I have attached a link to a fundraiser below. Contributions help ensure that fellowships and legal aid services can continue to reach the communities that need them most.

Update 3: This week's highlight was working on a case involving a child with a disability who had gone almost a year without medically necessary services after they were cut off. My co-counsel and I spent days running through opening and closing statements, and prepping direct and cross, with our mentor pushing us to tighten every argument. When we finally spoke in front of the judge, it paid off. The judge ordered the services reinstated.

I don't think I fully appreciated until this moment how much a single ruling can change someone's day-to-day life. For this family, it meant a child getting care they'd been going without for months. It was also a really validating moment for me personally, since health law is exactly the kind of work I came to law school hoping to do.

Update 4: Big moment this week: I won my first hearing as a student attorney with Michigan Law's Pediatric Advocacy Clinic!

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Update 5: This week I'm prepping for an evidentiary hearing in a housing conditions case with Michigan Law's Civil Criminal Litigation Clinic.

We already won a TRO that got the family placed in emergency housing while repairs were made. On Thursday, we're back in court arguing for an injunction to make sure the house is actually safe for them to move back into. That means putting together the case for why the repairs need to happen and hold up, not just why the family needed to leave in the first place. I'll be conducting the direct examination portion for the first time. My co-counsel and I have been running through the questions, walking through what the judge will need to hear, and making sure the testimony lines up cleanly with the affidavit and memorandum we've built. I'm nervous, but also excited! Standing up in front of a judge again, especially to advocate directly for a family's right to safe housing, is exactly why I wanted to do this work.

Final Reflection: This summer, I sat across from families in crisis and learned what it actually means to advocate for someone: not just knowing the law, but knowing how to build a narrative, tell that narrative clearly, and stand up in front of a judge and ask for exactly what your client needs. I argued my first hearing to restore a child's behavioral health services. I drafted my first TRO to get a family with young children out of a home overrun by roaches and mold. I ran my first direct examination, fighting to make sure that same family could move back into housing that was actually safe. And I watched a judge order services reinstated for a child who'd gone almost a year without care he was legally entitled to.

But the thing I keep thinking about, now that the summer is ending, is that advocacy doesn't mean anything if there's no accountability behind it. Winning an order is not the same as a family actually getting what they were promised. Some of the work that mattered most this summer wasn't the hearing itself, but everything after: the follow-up calls, the credentialing paperwork, the emails pressing an agency to actually reinstate services on the timeline the order required. It's less visible than standing up in a courtroom, and it doesn't come with the same adrenaline, but it's often where the real fight happens. A ruling is a beginning, not an ending, and someone has to stay in it long enough to make sure the words on the order become something real in a family's life.

I'm especially grateful to my mentors, Profs. Debra Chopp and David Santacroce, who pushed me to tighten every argument and never let me settle for good enough when a client's wellbeing was on the line, and who modeled that same follow-through for me all summer. I would also like to thank Equal Justice America for making this fellowship possible. I'm leaving this summer more committed to health law, disability rights, and housing justice than when I started, and more certain that this is the work I want to keep doing.