

Dear Mr. Dan Ruben,

I want to thank you so much for helping to fund my public interest internship this summer. I have always had a passion for public interest work, but I was hesitant to pursue an internship in this field this summer because of financial constraints. However, Equal Justice America made it possible for me to work at the Pennsylvania Health Law Project.

Barrack Obama has stated, "In the wealthiest nation on Earth, no one should go broke just because they get sick." Unfortunately, access to quality healthcare continues to remain a luxury in this country. As an intern at Pennsylvania Health Law Project I was able to see firsthand how difficult it is for low income Pennsylvania residents to navigate the healthcare system. I worked with clients who were forced to choose between paying for groceries and using the money for life sustaining prescriptions. How do you choose between the things that matter the most in life: food, water, electricity, medicine? These stories of sacrifice were common among my clients. With every phone call I received from a new client, I felt as if such decisions were in my hands. I told the clients whether or not we could assist them, what healthcare coverage they may or may not be qualified for, and ultimately, if they would have to continue to make these unbearable sacrifices.

Imagine being told that you are poor, but not poor enough to qualify for medical assistance; or being told that one of your children qualifies for medical benefits, but the other doesn't. Many of my clients faced such predicaments. I remember spending hours doing mathematical calculations to inform one of my clients that she was ineligible for medical coverage because she was twenty-eight dollars over the income limit. I also had clients who were eligible for medical assistance, but because they did not fill out the correct form, they were being denied services.

I worked with a client for weeks who was struggling to obtain health coverage for herself, her husband, and her daughter. The whole family had an assortment of medical issues and didn't have money for medical prescriptions. The mother, who had a heart condition and needed life sustaining medication, stopped purchasing her prescriptions so she could afford to purchase medicine for her husband and her daughter. There was a period of time when I didn't receive a phone call from her for weeks. She told me that she stopped paying her electric and phone bill so she could use the money for an inhaler for her daughter. Although her situation was grim, whenever I spoke to her on the phone, we had such pleasant conversations. She always laughed and made jokes and told me that laughing was the only way to prevent her from crying. I became determined that I would find some way to help this family receive health coverage. Through days of research and calling the County Assistance Office, I was finally able to

get the whole family on medical assistance. Without the funding from your organization, I would not have been in a position to help this family get the service they needed.

I truly cannot thank Equal Justice America enough for giving me such an eye-opening experience. I will be continuing my internship with PHLP in the fall and I will use the skills gained from this internship to be a strong advocate for vulnerable communities in need of health coverage.

Sincerely,

Cana Noel

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August 29, 2014

Via email to Katie@equaljusticeamerica.org
Dan Ruben
Executive Director
Equal Justice America

Re: Cana Noel Summer Fellowship

Dear Mr. Ruben:

The Pennsylvania Health Law Project was fortunate to host Cana Noel for a summer internship this past summer. PHLP was founded to advance access to quality health care for low-income, vulnerable and disenfranchised people and communities. Since 1990 we have provided free legal counsel and representation while working, often in partnership with others, on health policy changes that 1) maximize health coverage and access to care, 2) hold health insurers accountable to consumers, and 3) achieve better health outcome goals and reduce health disparities.

We are incredibly grateful to Cana for her work with us this past summer. She spent much of her summer working directly with clients across the state of Pennsylvania, providing advice on Medical Assistance eligibility (Medical Assistance is Pennsylvania's state Medicaid program). To provide effective advice, Cana had to quickly learn complex Medical Assistance rules, which she did with ease. Often, individuals who apply for Medical Assistance in Pennsylvania are improperly denied. Cana advocated for these individuals with their local County Assistance Office. Through her direct services work, Cana helped her clients get access to the health insurance they desperately needed. Over the summer, Cana also completed several research projects related to access to health care and health insurance. This research was crucial to our direct service work and to our advocacy work.

If I can be of any assistance or answer any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (215) 625-3662.

Sincerely,

Joline Price
Staff Attorney

Philadelphia ▪ Harrisburg ▪ Pittsburgh

Helping People In Need Get the Health Care They Deserve