



## Summer 2020 EJA Fellow:



**Name:** Kate Kobriger

**Law School:** Columbia Law School

**Organization:** Community Health Advocates at  
the Community Service Society of NY

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### Week of June 15th

Two weeks ago, I started my legal internship with Community Health Advocates (CHA), a Community Service Society of New York program that helps people navigate the healthcare system.

This year, healthcare clawed to the front of our minds in a terrifying new way. And while health has been the core of my career for several years, CHA brings into fresh focus the panoramic impact of this field of work. So far, I am contributing to rate review—a process that protects consumers by verifying changes in health plans' rates are linked to more than just padded profits. I am handling my first client case, helping a real person access necessary care at a price that is legally permissible and affordable.

I am thinking more deeply than ever about disparities in health outcomes between people of different races and different incomes—and I am lucky enough to be interning at an organization that is doing the same. In my first week, Community Service Society of New York released this call to action:

[https://www.cssny.org/news/entry/structural-inequalities-in-new-yorks-health-care-system?fbclid=IwAR0-IkqwL\\_hXngiqce-ZYjsqRnFY7ngCVtfVfjyoBz2UCXFEGpiQMQtRmw](https://www.cssny.org/news/entry/structural-inequalities-in-new-yorks-health-care-system?fbclid=IwAR0-IkqwL_hXngiqce-ZYjsqRnFY7ngCVtfVfjyoBz2UCXFEGpiQMQtRmw). I hope you'll consider giving it a read. Even if you don't live in New York, many of the same problems probably impact your state. I know they impact my home state, Wisconsin.

I am so thankful to Equal Justice America. Please consider donating to support work like mine.

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### Week of July 6th

Five weeks into my legal internship at Community Service Society of New York, rate review is complete!

Though I drew on my experience in hospital rate setting as a foundation, the pandemic meant many of the health plans' points were new. I delved into data about utilization, vaccinations, and testing—and I am proud to



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see my arguments in the final rate review letters, which HCFANY presented to the NY Department of Financial Services last week. Check out the final letters here: <https://lnkd.in/gk26GMc>.

As that project came to a close, I began tackling research on network adequacy (ensuring people can easily access care providers in the specialties they need) and direct client work (the most variable and perhaps the most challenging part of my internship). I am starstruck by my coworkers, who continue to invest their time in my learning, and by the consumers of New York, who are persistent but patient, and so very kind. Please consider supporting work like mine by reading more about Equal Justice America or by donating to their fellowship program.

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### **Week of July 27th**

I am thrilled to be submitting my first external appeals as a Community Service Society of New York legal intern this week! I reviewed medical records and health insurance communications, compiled peer-reviewed studies, and finally drafted appeals for two of Community Health Advocates' clients. These submissions are especially exciting for me because they are, to date, the most complex products of legal advocacy that I have written on a client's behalf—and they could not be for a worthier cause. Join me in hoping for two wins, and two patients with affordable access to the healthcare they need.

As always, I am deeply grateful to the people and organizations who are supporting my work this summer. Thank you to my educators at Columbia Law School, who gave me the legal training necessary for this job, and to Community Health Advocates, for offering me this opportunity. And of course, thank you to Equal Justice America for granting me this summer fellowship.

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### **Week of August 10th**

It's my final EJA Fellow Update!

I spent my summer as a legal intern with Community Health Advocates at the Community Service Society of New York, where I researched health policy and changes in the industry, worked directly with clients, and drafted advocacy documents including two(!) appeals. There is so much that we can only learn through experience, and I am thankful for this opportunity to translate my coursework into practice.

This summer was an early step toward my career in health law and a confirmation of my commitment to this field. Huge thanks to my instructors, mentors, and peers at Columbia for lifting me up and preparing me for this work, and to Equal Justice America for their support this summer.