

Health Law Advocates *Legal Network Update*

HLA Law and Policy Forum:

Brown Bag Luncheon Series

David Cutler

Senior Health Policy Advisor
to Presidential Candidate
Sen. Barack Obama and
Otto Eckstein Professor of
Applied Economics, Dept. of
Economics and Kennedy
School of Government,
Harvard University



Topic:

*An Informal
Discussion:
Sen. Obama's Health
Reform Plans*

Medical Debt Trainings

HLA's quickly increasing caseload is fueled partly by the increased incidence of low-income consumers with unaffordable medical bills. HLA is working to educate members of the private bar to represent consumers in this situation.

We invite you to two upcoming trainings at which HLA attorneys will appear to discuss advocacy on behalf of clients with medical debt:

The Growing Problem of Consumer Medical Debt: *Everything you want to know but are afraid to ask*

Sept. 25, 2008, 9:00 a.m -- 12:00 p.m., 16 Beacon St.

Sponsored by the Boston Bar Association

HLA Exec. Director Barbara Anthony will co-moderate and HLA Senior Staff Atty. Lorianne Sainsbury-Wong will serve as a panelist. See the Calendar page at www.BostonBar.org for more details.

The Legal Assistance Corp. of Central Mass. will host a training on health care access advocacy including how to assist those with unaffordable medical debt.

Sept. 25, 2008, Worcester Pub. Library, 2 Salem Sq.

Check your email inbox soon for more details!!!

HLA Deputy Director Matt Selig will serve as a panelist speaking on medical debt. The Massachusetts Bar Foundation provides support for Matt's participation in this training.

Monday, Sept. 15
12:00 - 1:30 p.m.
Suffolk Univ. Law School
First Floor Conference Rm.
120 Tremont St.
Boston, MA

RSVP Required
Call 617-338-5241 or
Email tboland@hla-inc.org

Upcoming Brown Bag Lunches

Jarrett T. Barrios

President

Blue Cross Blue Shield of
Massachusetts Foundation



Topic:

*The Shadow of ERISA and Mass
Health Reform*

October 8, 2008
12:00 -- 1:30 p.m.
Location: TBD

RSVP Required
Call 617-338-5241 or

*** Cases Available for Referral ***

If you wish to accept or discuss a specific referral case reply to this email or call Matt Selig at 617-338-5241 x2986.

We have 2 cases available for referral today.

M.M. -- (Previously listed case -- *Pro Bono Attorney still needed!!!*) -- M.M., a 37 year old Methuen man, recently incurred over \$20,000 in debt to health care providers after undergoing hip replacement surgery. **M.M.** has health insurance through his employer, but the plan provides limited benefits. **M.M.**'s remaining bills would have been covered by a State health care 'safety net' program, but the hospital failed to help **M.M.** apply for assistance. **M.M. needs an attorney to assist him address his outstanding medical bills.**

M.C. -- M.C., a 65 year old Somerville resident, has renal cancer. He receives treatment at a Boston hospital, but has only minimal state-subsidized coverage and expects to incur medical debt he cannot afford on his family's very low income. **M.C.** also has outstanding bills to a Cambridge hospital he can't afford. **M.C.** was enrolled in MassHealth (Medicaid) but his health insurance coverage was terminated, perhaps due to his immigration status. **M.C. needs a Spanish-speaking attorney to assist him in addressing his unaffordable medical bills and facilitate his enrollment in the best state-subsidized health plan available to him.**

*** Special Thanks ***

Thank you to Ajay Zutshi, Esq. for accepting the case of **E.M.** an 8 year old Worcester girl, in the custody of her great aunt and uncle who was enrolled in her great uncle's dental insurance plan through his union. **E.M.**'s great uncle recently received notice that **E.M.** was terminated from his dental plan because she is not his biological child. **E.M.** and her family need an attorney to restore her dental insurance coverage.

Email tboland@hla-inc.org

Lawyer of the Month



Andrew Dennington

Andrew, an HLA *Pro Bono* Legal Network member since January 2007, epitomizes the extraordinary contributions of the many new members of the Legal Network.

Andrew has provided superior legal representation in HLA referral matters involving one of HLA's fastest growing areas of practice - consumer medical debt. Numerous academic studies have highlighted the increasing impact unaffordable medical bills not covered by insurance are having on consumers in Massachusetts and across the nation. Among the painful consequences of medical debt is patients' loss of access to needed health care.

In 2006, **Andrew** represented **D.R.**, a 57 year old who had severed several fingers in a carpentry accident at home. **D.R.** was flown by helicopter to a Massachusetts hospital for emergency surgery. After being asked to pre-pay several thousands of dollars because of his lack of insurance, the hospital also provided **D.R.** with follow up care at several appointment. As a result of his accident, **D.R.** accumulated over \$130,000 in debt to the hospital and doctors. **D.R.** was uninsured and was not eligible for state assistance

Thank you to Sam Leadholm, Esq. for accepting the case of **L.B.** a 59 year old Sterling, Mass. woman, who recently required knee surgery when she was uninsured.

On her hospital's advice **L.B.** applied for public insurance programs and then had the surgery before her insurance eligibility was determined. The hospital advised her that if she applied for public insurance programs before her surgery her coverage would retroactively cover her care. **L.B.** was deemed eligible for a public insurance program but it did not provide retroactive coverage. **L.B.** recently received approximately \$15,000 in medical bills for her surgery. **L.B.** needs an attorney to assist her in addressing her medical debt.

Legal Network Members,

Thank you very much for everything you do for HLA's Pro Bono Legal Network. We are grateful for the services you provide to clients referred by HLA.

If you have any colleagues who might be interested in Health Law Advocates Pro Bono Legal Network please encourage them to sign up! We, and our clients, need their help!

Do not hesitate to contact me with any thoughts about HLA or the Legal Network.

- Matt

Matt Selig
HLA Deputy Director

The HLA Legal Network Update is sent to attorneys on the first and third Monday of each month.

programs. Through exhaustive negotiations with **D.R.**'s health care providers, Andrew reduced **D.R.**'s debt to approximately \$6,000. This result amounts to one of the largest debt reduction cases involving an HLA client.

Andrew now represents **G.A.**, a 48 year old Hadley man who owes over \$35,000 in hospital bills after treatment for a heart condition. **G.A.** had health insurance when he went to the hospital, but his plan was a 'mini-medical' plan with very limited benefits.

Additionally, **Andrew** recently assisted HLA's successful efforts to obtain a \$20,000 grant from the **Massachusetts Bar Foundation** to represent clients with medical debt and publish a medical debt legal practice guide.

Andrew is a second-year associate at **Conn Kavanaugh Rosenthal Peisch & Ford LLP** where he practices in the areas of civil litigation and white collar criminal defense. His civil practice includes commercial, tort, and employment litigation. **Andrew** also serves as Co-Chair of the Public Policy Committee of the Boston Bar Association's Business Law Section.

After receiving his undergraduate degree from **Columbia University**, **Andrew** received his law degree from **Boston College Law School**. Prior to attending law school, Andrew was a research assistant at the George Washington University Medical Center and a legislative aide in the U.S. House of Representatives. While in law school, he also interned in the legal department of **MassHealth**.

Thank you **Andrew** for your outstanding contributions to HLA and our clients!!!

Please Contact Matt Selig with any questions at selig@hla-inc.org or 617-338-5241 x2986.

www.healthlawadvocates.org

**SAVE THE
DATE!!!**

**HLA's Annual
Benefit**

**Breakfast
November 10,
2008**

**More information
to come!**

**HLA Pro Bono
Legal Network
Listserve**

HLA recently launched the
*Pro Bono Legal Network
Listserve!*

The Listserve is now being
used by *Pro Bono* Legal
Network members to seek
and give advice on HLA
referral matters from fellow
Legal Network members.

Once you join the Listserve,
HLA will send you guidelines
for using the Listserve.

To join the Listserve **click
here**
