

Emerging from the Covid-19 Pandemic

Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids Goes Statewide

Our Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids (MHAP for Kids) has represented 500 youth with unmet mental health needs since the pandemic began, a time when an increasing number of youth are suffering from acute mental illness and experiencing significant health and educational consequences as a result. In the Spring, MHAP for Kids expanded to a statewide service area for the first time, a key step to help us meet this critical need.

Immigrant Health Initiative Serves 225 Clients Since the Pandemic Began

HLA's Medical-Legal Partnership for Immigrants serves immigrants referred by Boston Medical Center's Immigrant and Refugee Center and helps them overcome persistent wrongful denials of health insurance. Our overarching Immigrant Health Initiative protects immigrants with financial insecurity across the state, a population who are far more likely to face health care barriers and be frontline workers, heightening their health risks.

Advocating for Clients With Medical Debt Amid Deep Economic Hardship

The pandemic is inflicting financial devastation on an enormous number of families throughout our state. Hundreds have come to HLA during the pandemic for help with unaffordable and unjust medical bills while struggling to pay for housing and food, including numerous clients improperly billed for testing and treatment of COVID-19. One of HLA's top priorities is protecting individuals in low-income situations from medical bills they should not have received, often by securing coverage.

Serving the Transgender Community Denied Access to Gender-Affirming Care

HLA helps transgender Massachusetts residents access health care, particularly gender-affirming services, by addressing systemic obstacles such as insurance limitations and unlawful billing practices. Our team advocates for transgender people by providing them legal representation and seeking policy reforms that address the injustices surfaced through our client work.

Maintaining the Health Care Safety Net During and in the Wake of the Pandemic

During the pandemic, HLA is working with state officials and other advocates to fight for increased access to health care in MassHealth for the 2 million people relying on this critical public insurance program during and after our public health crisis.

HLA's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- In August 2020, HLA launched its first Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to address inequities inside and outside of our organization. The Committee has since developed our DEI mission statement and a list of DEI-related goals to strive toward.
- In November 2020, Foley & Lardner joined as our Pro Bono Partner for Racial Justice. Through HLA's Pro Bono Legal Network, the firm is dedicating pro bono resources and financial support toward combating systems that oppress people of color and immigrants.
- In Spring 2021, HLA created a paid summer intern program to help with capacity-building. We attracted more than 500 applicants, demonstrating the importance of promoting public interest health advocacy.
- In Summer 2021, HLA developed a DEI education calendar with external consultants to facilitate discourse and difficult conversations.