

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Health Law Advocates awarded \$100,000 Cummings grant**

*Boston nonprofit receives 2 years of funding from Cummings Foundation*

June 1, 2021 – Health Law Advocates (HLA) is one of 140 local nonprofits to receive a grant of \$100,000 to \$500,000 each through Cummings Foundation’s \$25 Million Grant Program. The Boston-based organization was chosen from a total of 590 applicants during a competitive review process. HLA will receive \$100,000 over 2 years.

Health Law Advocates (HLA) is a public interest law firm whose mission is to provide pro bono legal representation to Massachusetts residents with household income of 300% of the federal poverty line or below and who are experiencing difficulty accessing or paying for needed medical services. HLA is committed to ensuring universal access to quality health care in Massachusetts, particularly for those who are most at risk due to such factors as race, gender, disability, age, or geographic location.

“This generous grant from The Cummings Foundation will enable HLA to respond to the children’s mental health crisis that has come about due to the pandemic,” said Matt Selig, HLA’s Executive Director. “We will direct this funding to our Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids which uses legal advocacy to help children overcome obstacles to mental health services so they can live healthier lives and have greater success in school.”

HLA’s Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids (MHAP for Kids) has 10 attorneys based in communities across Massachusetts -- Boston, Brockton, Holyoke, Hyannis, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Quincy, and Worcester – who serve more than 600 families annually. HLA’s Cummings Foundation grant will support MHAP for Kids’ Boston, Lowell, and Lynn sites. MHAP for Kids attorneys advocate for children’s access to mental health services with schools, health insurers, state agencies, health care providers, and the juvenile court system.

A two-year study of MHAP for Kids found that children who receive services from MHAP for Kids experienced *significantly* improved: mental health, improved school attendance, and less time receiving hospital-based care.

MHAP for Kids is also supported by funding from the state’s Department of Children and Families and grants from The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation, the Mabel Louise Riley Foundation, the Theodore Edson Parker Foundation, the Essex County Community Foundation, the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, the Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation, the Greater Lowell Community Foundation and the Bennett Family Foundation.

The Cummings \$25 Million Grant Program supports Massachusetts nonprofits that are based in and primarily serve Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties.

Through this place-based initiative, Cummings Foundation aims to give back in the area where it owns commercial buildings, all of which are managed, at no cost to the Foundation, by its affiliate, Cummings Properties. This Woburn-based commercial real estate firm leases and manages 10 million square feet of debt-free space, the majority of which exclusively benefits the Foundation.

“We aim to help meet the needs of people in all segments of our local community,” said Cummings Foundation executive director Joel Swets. “It is the incredible organizations we fund, however, that do the actual daily work to empower our neighbors, educate our children, fight for equity, and so much more.”

With the help of about 80 volunteers, the Foundation first identified 140 organizations to receive grants of at least \$100,000 each. Among the winners were first-time recipients as well as nonprofits that had previously received Cummings Foundation grants. Forty of this latter group of repeat recipients were then selected to have their grants elevated to 10-year awards ranging from \$200,000 to \$500,000 each.

“We have adopted a democratic approach to philanthropy, which empowers an impressive roster of dedicated volunteers to decide more than half of all our grant winners each year,” said Swets. “We benefit from their diverse backgrounds and perspectives; they benefit from a meaningful and fulfilling experience; and the nonprofits often benefit from increased exposure and new advocates.”

This year’s grant recipients represent a wide variety of causes, including social justice, homelessness prevention, affordable housing, education, violence prevention, and food insecurity. The nonprofits are spread across 43 different cities and towns.

The complete list of 140 grant winners, plus more than 800 previous recipients, is available at [www.CummingsFoundation.org](http://www.CummingsFoundation.org).

Cummings Foundation has now awarded more than \$300 million to greater Boston nonprofits.

### **About Health Law Advocates**

Health Law Advocates, founded in 1996, is our state’s only legal aid organization dedicated solely to health care access. We have served more than 15,000 clients and played a key role in legal and policy advocacy ensuring health care access for millions in Massachusetts.

### **About Cummings Foundation**

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation, Inc. was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings and has grown to be one of the three largest private foundations in New England. The Foundation directly operates its own charitable subsidiaries, including New Horizons retirement communities in Marlborough and Woburn, and Veterinary School at Tufts, LLC in North Grafton. Additional information is available at [www.CummingsFoundation.org](http://www.CummingsFoundation.org).

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HLA’s MHAP for Kids staff recently celebrated the Cummings Foundation grant award.

