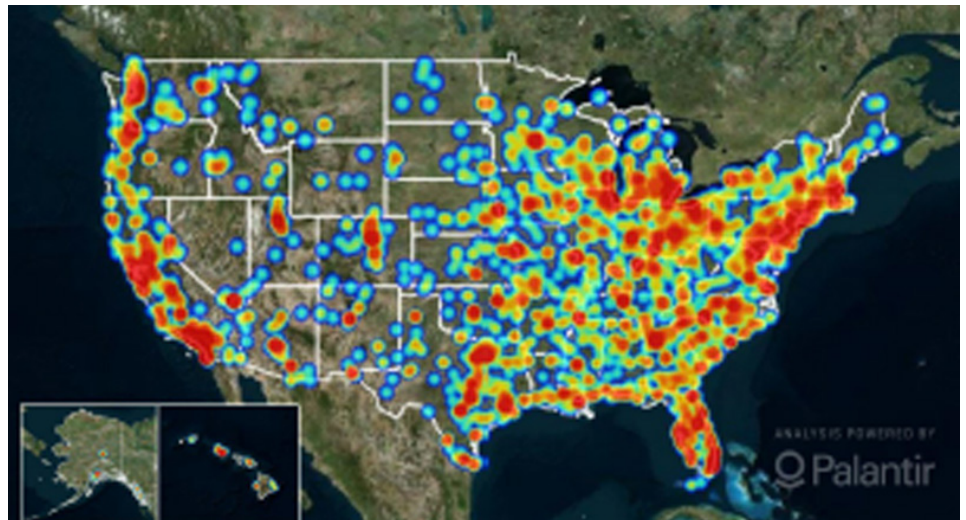


Human Trafficking in New Jersey

New Jersey has one of the highest rates of human trafficking in the country. Its proximity to major cities and diverse immigrant population make the region especially conducive to this hidden but pervasive crime.

As a long-standing member of the New Jersey Attorney General’s Task Force on Human Trafficking, LSNJ has been a partner in this fight for many years, but recently stepped up efforts to assist this vulnerable population.

LSNJ PROTECT, our newest representation project, serves victims of sex and labor trafficking, regardless of age and immigration



The image above is a heat map which reflects the likely trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline in the United States. This is not a comprehensive illustration of the scale or scope of human trafficking. Areas in which greater numbers of situations were reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline contain more red shading. This map only reflects situations in which the location of the potential trafficking was known. Additionally, some situations may involve more than one location.

status. The project launched in March 2020 with its own toll-free

Hotline number and, with the help of state and federal victim’s assistance grants, has already grown from one full-time attorney to four attorneys, one in-house social worker, and two paralegals. These new staff members have diverse backgrounds in civil legal aid, immigration, and criminal justice.

PROTECT partners with Covenant House, a statewide provider of services for human trafficking victims under the attorney general, and other service agencies such as the Dream Free Program by

National Trafficking Cases in 2018

From the Polaris Project

SEX TRAFFICKING

Escort services	1,535
Residential-based	635
Pornography	537

LABOR TRAFFICKING

Domestic work	214
Agriculture and animal husbandry	157
Traveling sales crews	138

SEX AND LABOR TRAFFICKING

Illicit massage, health, beauty	1,011
Bars, strip clubs, cantinas	214
Other illicit activities	119

Human Trafficking

Continued from page 1

Avanzar, a Department of Children and Families-funded program for trafficked youth. It engages in extensive outreach and training to entities who may come into contact with victims of human trafficking, including prosecutors' offices, hospitals, the NJ Coalition against Domestic Violence, the New Jersey Department of Labor, and a range of service providers from substance abuse facilities to community organizations. PROTECT presented at the Governor's Commission on Human Trafficking and has trained Legal Services staff on identification of red flags, assessing victim safety, and referring clients to other resources. Most recently, at our 2020 Virtual Annual Conference, Lt. John Pizzuro of the New Jersey State Police Digital Technology Investigations Unit spoke about alarming recent trends of online grooming and sexual exploitation of youth during COVID-19.



Legal Assistance to Medical PatientsSM Project Continues to Grow

Newark Beth Israel Medical Center (NBIMC) was the inaugural partner of LSNJ's Legal Assistance to Medical PatientsSM (LAMP) project when it was created in 2008 and was the first medical-legal partnership in the state. With the critical support of David Mebane, General Counsel of RWJBarnabas Health, and Darrell K. Terry, President and CEO of NBIMC, LAMP has become a vital program within the NBIMC facility.

This foundation has helped pave the way for LAMP expansion, which now includes two other RWJBarnabas Health system facilities—Jersey City Medical Center and RWJ University Hospital New Brunswick, with other sites now in development. Learn more on the following pages about LAMP, its mission and progress, people we have helped, and LAMP's new pro bono partnership with Bristol Myers Squibb.



"We are committed to addressing the social determinants of health that lead to poor health outcomes and health care disparities for our patients and their families. For more than a decade, the Legal Services of New Jersey LAMP program has been a staunch partner in this effort at NBIMC and it is rewarding to watch the program continue to expand into another sister facility."

Darrell K. Terry, MHA, MPH, FACHE
President and CEO, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center



"RWJBarnabas Health has worked with Dawn Miller and Legal Services of New Jersey for nearly 15 years to offer medically-focused legal services to patients of our [RWJBarnabas Health] System. Legal Services helps to promote the System's mission to make our communities healthier by addressing a myriad of issues—housing, benefits, guardianships, special education, and immigration, among many others."

David A. Mebane
General Counsel, RWJBarnabas Health

Medical-Legal Partnership Responds In the Moment—When People Need It the Most

Annie gave birth prematurely during the peak of the pandemic. Social workers in her son’s newborn intensive care unit (NICU) referred the case to LSNJ’s Legal Assistance for Medical PatientsSM project (LAMP) for help getting an extension of unemployment benefits, accessing her stimulus payment, and applying for SSI on her son’s behalf. LSNJ social workers continue to work with Annie to help her arrange for in-home care for her son, who will need lifelong rehabilitation and other medical services.

Joanna suffers from asthma and COPD. When the knob regulating heat in her senior housing unit broke, the heat ran at full blast around the clock. She was referred to LAMP after being admitted to the hospital for breathing problems that were exacerbated by the constant hot dry air. Management had resisted her requests for repairs, saying they could only do “emergency” repairs during the pandemic, but after a LAMP attorney contacted the local housing authority, repairs were made and Joanna was able to return home.

“LAMP integrates the unique expertise of lawyers into the health care setting of RWJBarnabas to help us as health care providers effectively address the social influencers of health that are at the root of so many of the health inequities we see in our patients on a daily basis.”

Annie and Joanna are only two of the patients assisted by LAMP, a partnership initially launched at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center in 2008. Since that time, the project has expanded to include relationships with St. Joseph’s University Medical Center in 2015, and two additional Robert Wood Johnson Barnabas Health sites including Jersey City Medical Center in 2016, and RWJ University Hospital in New Brunswick in January 2020. By partnering with medical

departments and social workers in these settings, advocates can intervene at critical moments, assisting with everything from housing to guardianship and power of attorney issues; Social Security, unemployment, and welfare benefits; as well as family issues, such as domestic violence, and custody.

During the past year, LAMP staff immediately responded to the restrictions of COVID-19 by offering virtual presentations for hospital staff, averaging 10 per site, on topics

Shilpa Pai, MD FAAP, Director
Resident Education in Advocacy
and Community Health
at RWJ University Hospital
New Brunswick

Continued on page 4

RWJBarnabas Health “...has encouraged all of our hospitals to look at and address the social determinants of health our communities face. LAMP epitomizes that focus. The legal issues that burden patients and their families are now being addressed by LSNJ’s medical-legal partnership working in conjunction with the hospital’s clinical and social work staff. Additionally, we are most appreciative of the support we receive from Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS) in the form of funding and pro bono efforts through their in-house legal staff.”

Kevin McTernan, Assistant Vice President, Support Services at RWJ University Hospital New Brunswick

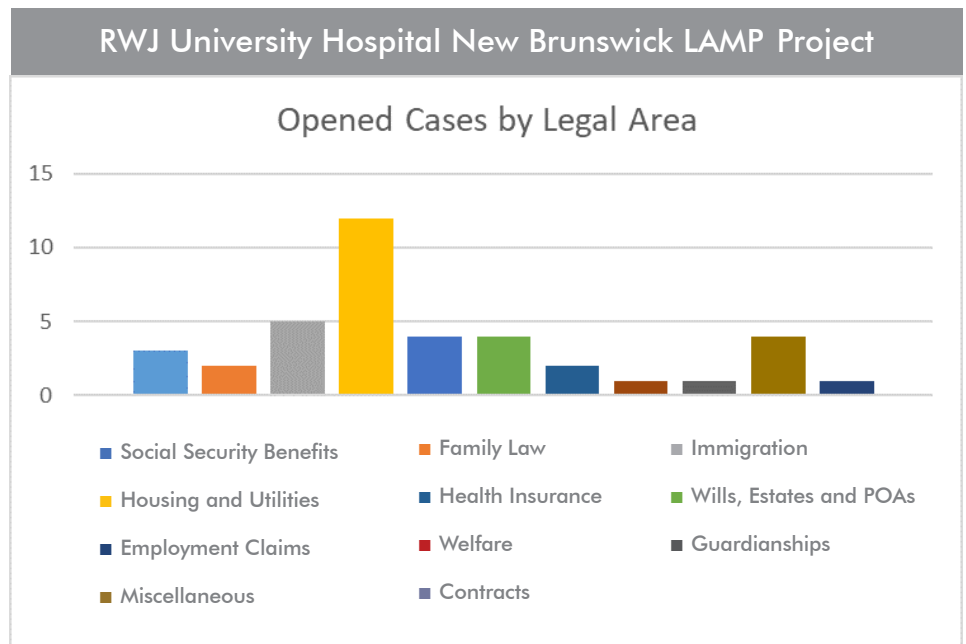
Medical-Legal Partnership Responds in the Moment

Continued from page 3

such as public benefits, housing law, domestic violence, health care access, employment rights, advance care and planning, immigration, and COVID-19 emergency rental assistance. Over 550 cases were opened representing approximately 1,200 people who were helped in 2020 through this critical program.

Says LAMP director Stacey

Bussel, “The impacts on one’s wellbeing caused by social determinants of health—the conditions in which people live, work, learn, and play—are well-known. As can be seen from the types of cases handled by LAMP ... the impacts on the individuals and families we represent are particularly striking for those living in poverty.”



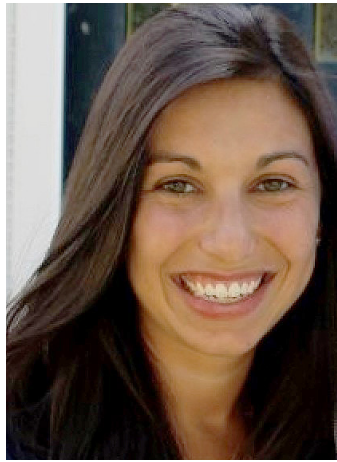


Visit www.probononj.org to register

LSNJ Welcomes Two New Volunteers from Bristol-Myers Squibb



Rachita Bhatt is Associate Counsel for Bristol Myers Squibb Company's Global Quality Law team. Her responsibilities include providing comprehensive legal advice on GxP (quality guidelines and regulations) issues, including regulatory and compliance matters associated with quality concerns. Rachita earned a BA from Emory University and a JD from Washington University in St. Louis. Prior to joining BMS, Rachita worked in private practice for 5.5 years and she also served as an intern with LSNJ for one year from 2013–2014. Rachita maintains a strong pro bono practice and is dedicated to improving the lives of the disenfranchised.



Daryl Daly is Associate Counsel for Bristol Myers Squibb Company's Global Quality Law team. She provides legal advice on GxP (quality guidelines and regulations), and counsels on quality-related regulatory and compliance matters companywide. Daryl earned a BA from Rutgers University, New Brunswick, and a JD from Rutgers University, Camden. Prior to joining BMS, Daryl worked in private practice.

Ms. Bhatt and Ms. Daly are working with the LAMP project (story on page 3) at RWJ University Hospital in New Brunswick.

To me, maintaining a strong pro bono practice is more than a professional responsibility; it is essential to how I have chosen to live my life—with intention, grace, and a strong desire to give back to the most vulnerable members of society. I feel fortunate to have the opportunity to support Legal Services of New Jersey's causes and look forward to our continued partnership.

Rachita Bhatt

Advocating for the Best Interests of Children and Parents in the Child Welfare System



Ilesha Hammons is LSNJ's first "parent ally." In this role, she works with LSNJ's Family Representation Project to help prevent unnecessary child removals not related to abuse or neglect but from poverty-induced circumstances.

In New Jersey and across the country, many child welfare removals occur as a result of housing instability and other manifestations of multigenerational poverty, leading to devastating, yet preventable, trauma for children and families. Poverty is not a basis for family separation. LSNJ has worked to prevent removal and support reunification for many years through its Family Representation Project. Highlights from the past year include the following:

Parent Ally Program

In 2018, LSNJ introduced a new project in conjunction with the NJ Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCPP). Receiving client referrals directly from DCPP allows us to quickly identify and assist with critical legal issues, and help prevent the loss of housing—thereby

preventing unnecessary removals and ultimately keeping families together. Since the inauguration of this prevention work, LSNJ has received more than 200 referrals from across New Jersey and no children in those cases were removed. Through the support of the Schumann Fund of New Jersey, we have been able to hire Ilesha Hammons as a "parent ally," the first position of its kind in New Jersey. Ms. Hammons has assisted in over 20 of these prevention cases. In this role, she speaks with parents and families and uses her perspective and experience to provide support. As someone who experienced the child welfare system as both a child, and as a mother, Ms. Hammons possesses a dual perspective that has driven her to feel passionately about helping other struggling parents.

"Lived experience is often the best teacher. A parent ally brings empathy, compassion, and understanding to their 'clients' at a crucial time in their lives."

Annette Strickland, Executive Director
Schumann Fund for New Jersey

2020 Family Unification Day

LSNJ hosted its first ever virtual Unification Day event—an annual celebration that historically takes place in June, but was delayed as a result of COVID-19. The Zoom event honoring 28 parents and heroes was held on November 17. It included appearances by RISE parent leaders and remarks from the Honorable David Katz.

Reimagining the Resource Parent System

A new LSNJ-produced video titled “A Partnership of Hope: One Family’s Story” was released in December and can be viewed on

our website. This new video examines the role of resource parents in the child welfare system and the ways in which they can support reunification. For more information,

articles, and videos about LSNJ’s efforts in the child welfare area, visit www.lsnj.org/PovertyChild-Welfare.aspx.



This and other LSNJ-produced videos can be found on our YouTube channel, or under the Multimedia tab on lsnj.org. These include numerous child welfare policy videos from prior Unification Day events, and legal rights videos to assist unrepresented clients.

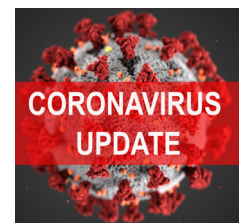
A Special Thank You to Our Rutgers Law-Camden Student Interns!

LSNJ would like to thank our Rutgers Law-Camden student interns for volunteering during their winter break. They provided valuable assistance to the Foreclosure Defense Project and Landlord Tenant section of the LSNJLAWSM Hotline.



Clockwise from top left are Tue Ho, Kelly Monahan, Hayly Mickles, Vira Shao, Jacob Stockton, Stephanie Mignogna, and Gina Lombardo.

For legal updates related to COVID-19, visit LSNJLAWSM





www.LSNJLAW.org – A legal information website to help you learn more about your civil legal rights in New Jersey and access materials to help you represent yourself pro se.

www.LSNJ.org – An organizational website where you can learn about the work of Legal Services.

www.PROBONONJ.org – A site where attorneys can learn about and sign up for pro bono opportunities.

www.NJEJLA.org – The New Jersey Equal Justice Library and Archive is an educational resource that includes a history of Legal Services in New Jersey, interviews with current and former staff, and tributes to major contributors to social justice.

POVERTY to JUSTICE

A Quarterly Report from
Legal Services of New Jersey

To be added to the mailing list for this newsletter, email development@lsnj.org.

Poverty to Justice quarterly newsletter includes updates on our work, our clients, and our volunteers as we move together toward the shared mission of justice.



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