



Outstanding Program or Organization Award: *Legal Aid Society of Cleveland - Community Advocacy Program*

Given annually to a nonprofit organization, agency, government entity, association or program of any of the foregoing, that is consistent with the mission of the Foundation and promotes the dissemination of public information, improvement of public understanding and enhancement of public education concerning our system of justice and how it impacts the citizens of Ohio.



The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland's Community Advocacy Program (CAP) is a partnership between Legal Aid attorneys and healthcare providers of the MetroHealth Medical Center. The program's objective is to remove legal barriers which interfere with health.

Mallory Curran, a lawyer for the Community Advocacy Program, was quoted as saying, "The roots of some health problems cannot be solved by healthcare alone, but can be solved by enforcing a patient's legal rights and finding them coverage for which they are eligible. The Community Advocacy Program brings together highly-trained professionals who work to solve healthcare disparities in our community."

CAP focuses on specific vulnerable populations including at-risk children, families, the elderly, formerly incarcerated persons, Spanish-speakers and other recent immigrants. Within CAP, Legal Aid attorneys provide representation and outreach related to public benefits, housing, safety and access to education.

The goal of the lawyers at the Legal Aid Society is to practice preventative law by solving problems before harm comes to the

patient. Doctors—seeing possible legal barriers for a patient—will refer those persons to the CAP lawyer who has a Legal Aid office in the medical center. The convenience of an accessible lawyer in the building saves time and travel costs for people with limited means. Currently, the program hopes to expand its coverage to more locations within MetroHealth.

With an increased staff and amplified geographical coverage, the Community Advocacy Program is becoming a nationally recognized legal-healthcare model. Patients who would have otherwise been defenseless to a complex healthcare system have access to professionals eager to fight for their legal rights. In the words of Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world... Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."



TOP PHOTO: Cleveland's Legal Aid society is a group of dedicated talent.

LEFT: Mike Hardy (from Thompson Hine, LLP) sports a physician's coat. RIGHT: Mallory Curran also maintains an office at MetroHealth Medical Center—serving patients with low-income.