

Job Description

Health Law Advocates Legal Director

Join a leading non-profit, public interest law firm dedicated to protecting consumers' right to access health care through individual and class-action cases, policy initiatives and systemic challenges.

The Opportunity

Health Law Advocates (HLA) is a non-profit, public interest law firm committed to ensuring universal access to quality health care in Massachusetts. HLA is seeking a new Legal Director to expand its litigation capacity and mentor and lead its team of dedicated in-house and volunteer lawyers in representing low-income residents in both individual and class action cases. The new Legal Director will join a highly regarded organization with a 22-year track record of successful legal advocacy to break down barriers to health care for vulnerable consumers. This newly created position is a great opportunity to make a difference on a range of cutting-edge health care issues, expanding the impact of this very important organization.

The ideal candidate will be an experienced and skillful litigator who shares HLA's commitment to health care equity and social justice. They will be a strategic thinker, able to identify issues and trends to inform policy development and prioritize litigation. An excellent communicator and relationship builder, they will also possess a strong understanding of state government, to enhance HLA's ability to engage with the state to influence policy.

The Legal Director will work closely with HLA's Executive Director to assess the changing health care landscape, identifying opportunities for high-impact legal action and for deploying HLA's highly effective legal aid resources. They will play an important part in cultivating HLA's networks and relationships, and, importantly, they will develop HLA's legal team, helping to foster a culture that is positive, collaborative and committed to excellence.

Organizational Overview

Health Law Advocates (HLA) is a 501(c)(3) public interest law firm whose mission is to provide pro bono legal representation to low-income residents 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. HLA's services include:

Representing Health Care Consumers: HLA provides high quality, free legal assistance to income-eligible Massachusetts residents having difficulty accessing health care or health insurance coverage. They also provide legal assistance to consumers with unaffordable medical debt. HLA represents individuals and litigates class action and impact cases.

HLA specializes in:

- Challenging denials of health insurance enrollment
- Fighting denials of coverage for specific health care services
- Protecting patients from illegal medical billing and collection practices
- Obtaining access to health care through state agencies and school systems, especially for children; through its Mental Health Advocacy Program for Kids (MHAP), HLA provides an innovative service that helps children in or at risk of entering the juvenile court system overcome barriers to mental health care

Community Education and Outreach: An important community resource, HLA builds knowledge in communities on how to access health care and delivers cutting-edge information to consumers, advocates and other health care system stakeholders through well-regarded trainings and presentations throughout Massachusetts and by authoring publications that promote access to health care.

Policy Advocacy: HLA advocates for public policy reforms that help consumers access health care. They offer their legal expertise and experience working with consumers to policymakers on the state and federal levels and in all three branches of government and advocate for policy changes by health care institutions to enhance health care access. HLA conducts its policy advocacy in collaboration with other advocates.

HLA's effectiveness is strengthened by its relationship with its sister organizations, Health Care for All (HCFA) and Community Catalyst. HCFA is a leader in grassroots organizing and policy analysis to achieve universal health care access. Community Catalyst's mission is to organize and sustain a powerful consumer voice to ensure that all individuals and communities can influence the local, state and national decisions that affect their health. The offices for the three organizations are adjacent. Together, they create a robust ecosystem for influencing access to and affordability of health care in the Commonwealth.

[The Legal Director Role: Scope and Responsibilities](#)

Reporting to the Executive Director, the Legal Director will be responsible for day-to-day oversight of HLA's Legal Department and play a hands-on leadership role in representing low-income residents in both individual and class-action cases. Today, much of its legal activities focus on representing individuals in administrative agencies; expanding the department's litigation capacity will be a major priority, to expand the array of services offered to consumers and deepen HLA's impact. The Legal Director will mentor and develop the skills of HLA's team of talented in-house and volunteer attorneys, to enable them and the organization to thrive, and will help set the tone for HLA's culture and standard of excellence.

HLA's ability to build and maintain relationships with like-minded organizations and individuals, and with government agencies, will be key to its effectiveness and ability to adapt. HLA's Legal Director will collaborate with the senior leadership in cultivating those relationships. They will also coordinate and seek new opportunities for staff attorney ventures outside of client representation. This role will build on HLA's history as a leader in public policy engagement, community outreach and authorship across communication platforms to promote health care access.

Specific Responsibilities:

Oversee and participate in HLA's representation of vulnerable, low-income consumers denied access to health care

- Reinforce the positive, committed, collaborative, entrepreneurial and high-expectation culture of HLA
- Supervise, mentor and coach HLA staff attorneys, particularly around litigation, to expand HLA's capacities and capabilities
- Refine internal processes, practices and tools and ensure that HLA is collecting and analyzing client data as necessary to identify health care access trends

Work in close partnership with the Executive Director, Board and senior leadership to assess the current landscape, identifying trends and issues to aid in strategic planning, policy and litigation development

- Identify and pursue opportunities for high-impact legal action
- Contribute to writing grant applications and grant reports
- Leverage the expertise, advice and collaboration of the Legal Strategy Committee of HLA's Board of Directors to develop legal action
- Stay current on health law and other relevant legal topics as necessary to protect health care consumers' rights
- Collaborate with the Executive Director and Staff Attorneys to determine the optimal deployment of HLA's legal advocacy capacity between client representation and other ventures
- Partner with HLA's administrative and development staff to promote HLA's legal services in communities statewide
- Participate in community outreach activities, including educational programs for consumers, lawyers and other audiences
- Contribute to the authorship of consumer guidance and other materials to promote health care access

Contribute to building and cultivating relationships with HLA's clients, partners, providers, government agencies and others

- Represent HLA on coalitions of advocacy organizations as needed
- Maintain and establish strong relationships with staff members at allied legal and health advocacy organizations and expand partnerships with other legal firms

- Cultivate and maintain connections with key officials within state and federal government and private/non-profit health care institutions

Initial Priorities and Expectations

In the first 6–12 months, the Legal Director will be expected to:

- Provide hands-on leadership to the legal department, overseeing and participating in representation of low-income residents in both individual and class-action cases
- Manage the transition and cultivate teamwork, while maintaining HLA’s standards of excellence in representing their constituents
- Train and coach staff attorneys to build capacity and capability, particularly in litigation
- Refine internal processes to ensure effective data collection to enable strategic selection of cases and, more broadly, to ensure the smooth running of the department
- Develop productive external relationships with like-minded people and organizations
- Cultivate strong internal communications within HLA and the 5th floor ecosystem, including HCFA and Community Catalyst
- Work with staff, Board and external partners to develop and bring a high-impact suit

Qualifications

The new Legal Director will bring a successful track record as lead counsel in state and/or federal litigation and a proven commitment to social justice. While experience in health care and/or consumer protection law is valuable, deep expertise is not a requirement. Demonstrated leadership ability and strong management skills will be key, along with the ability and drive to build collaborative teams and a positive culture.

Experience

- Broad, diverse knowledge and experience in state and/or federal health, disability and/or consumer protection law
- Highly desirable areas of expertise include: Medicaid, ERISA, ADA, UDAP (MGL Ch. 93A) and/or Mental Health/Substance Use Law
- Understands health policy and the challenges Massachusetts residents face in accessing and affording health care
- Solid knowledge of legislative and administrative policymaking
- Experienced and dedicated mentor, with the ability to supervise and foster growth in other attorneys
- Experience setting up and refining systems and processes in a legal department

Skills and Attributes

- Invigorated by the challenges of the times; optimistic and visionary, while realistic, with a sense of humor
- Outstanding written and oral communication skills

- Strategic thinker and creative problem solver who can also execute; finds interest and excitement in both strategic development and hands-on legal work
- Intellectually curious; open, with the desire and ability to listen and learn
- Highly organized, decisive and diplomatic
- Intellectual rigor and superior legal research and analysis skills
- Relationship builder; committed to creating and cultivating networks and partnerships with like-minded people and organizations
- Teacher and advocate who can increase visibility and understanding of HLA in the outside world
- Approachable and empathetic
- Bilingual/bicultural background a plus

Benefits

- Competitive salary
- Robust benefits package, including generous paid time off policy
- Convenient downtown Boston location, with pleasant offices co-located with two organizations with complementary missions

To nominate a candidate, or to apply, forward resume and one-page cover letter in confidence to E. Catlin Donnelly & Associates at hla@ecdonnaelly.com

E. Catlin Donnelly & Associates is conducting the search. Please do not apply directly to HLA.

Health Law Advocates is an AA/EO Employer. People of color, LGBTQ identified people, gender-nonconforming people, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and people who speak a language in addition to English are encouraged to apply.