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SNAP
FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Reasonable Accommodations in Assisted Living

Negotiated Rulemaking

Medical-Legal Partnerships

Welfare Privatization

Child Welfare Financing Reform

LGBT Elders' Economic Security and Health Care



Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law

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About This Issue

Recent economic, political, societal, and legal changes complicate the lives of low-income clients and their communities. Against this onslaught legal aid advocates rely on their resourcefulness and creativity to resolve legal problems and obtain beneficial results for their clients. In today's uncertain circumstances some of these benefits are for the short term, others for the long term. The articles in this issue reflect the effects of some of the various substantive areas that come into play in the lives of low-income clients and the intersection of different areas of law. The authors, experienced advocates in their fields, offer insightful observations, recommendations, and solutions.

Seniors' fair housing rights to request reasonable accommodations in assisted living facilities or in their own homes are discussed in an article that also studies the California licensing scheme and two case examples. Another article, the second part of one we published last year (CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW, March–April 2010), urges advocates and their older lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender clients whose low income affects their access to health care to learn and assert their rights under Medicare, Medicaid, and social security and Supplemental Security Income rules.

For low-income young people, a postsecondary education is critical to advancing their opportunities, and obtaining Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits can improve their daily lives so that they can focus on their educational goals. A large proportion of low-income college students are eligible for SNAP, according to this issue's lead article, which lays out the ways to qualify for one of the exceptions to the "disqualification" rule. For younger children living in foster care, another article warns against following the policy lead of substituting block grants for other programs (and resulting budget cuts) and emphasizes the importance of maintaining the entitlement to foster care funding.

The privatization of the operation of public benefit programs, a trend that began over ten years ago, and its attendant ineffectiveness continue today and affect many clients. (See our special issue on privatization, CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW, January–February 2002.) One author offers new suggestions for this harmful trend that will not go away. She recommends requiring contract-monitoring bodies to involve community members to facilitate transparent contracting processes for the social welfare programs serving clients.

An expanding effective partnership model that brings together doctors and lawyers to help clients whose health may be harmed by problems that lawyers can help solve is the medical-legal partnership, whose origins stem from Boston's Medical Center and Boston University's School of Medicine in the early 1990s. MFY Legal Services' Mental Health–Legal Partnership with New York City mental health care providers is another pioneer. The article studying this partnership can help advocates determine if this model would be appropriate for their clients. This issue's other article pertinent to such circumstances proposes negotiated rulemaking principles as an effective alternative to traditional rule-making.

Ilze Sprudz Hirsh

CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW encourages the submission of articles from legal aid field staff and others. Send articles to Ilze Sprudz Hirsh, editor and vice president of communication programs, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, 50 E. Washington St. Suite 500, Chicago, IL 60602; ilzehirsh@povertylaw.org.

The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and should not be construed as representing the opinions or policy of the organizations which employ them or of the Shriver Center.

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