

## NHeLP Matters March 2014

Welcome to the year's first edition of NHeLP Matters, our quarterly look at all things NHeLP.

2014 rolled in with a bang, and NHeLP has been working with advocates around the country to realize the gains made by the Affordable Care Act, defending women's health at the Supreme Court, and ensuring that our nation's health programs truly meet the needs of the communities they are designed to serve.

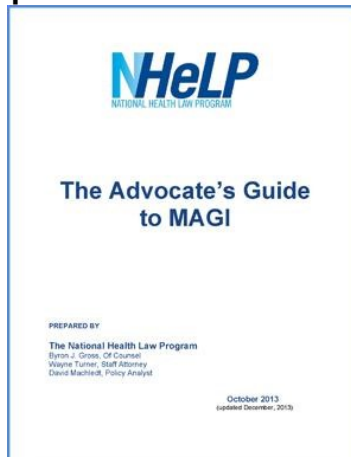
Learn more about some of our tremendous accomplishments below!

### Health Reform Implementation

#### A Win for Missouri's Navigators

In a major victory for Missouri's navigators and fair warning to other states, a federal District Court ruled that Missouri's unnecessary and burdensome navigator requirements are preempted by federal law. The case, *Missouri vs. St. Louis Effort for AIDS*, was brought by NHeLP and co-counsel Jay Angoff of Mehri & Skalet, PLLC. It was the first to challenge Missouri's additional restrictions on consumer-assistance entities such as navigators and application counselors. The court's ruling made clear that federally funded navigators must be allowed to exercise the duties outlined for them under federal law, and Missouri cannot interfere with that.

#### New and Improved Advocates Guide to MAGI



An indispensable resource for health advocates, the [Advocates Guide to MAGI](#) now includes updated federal poverty and IRS exemption amounts, along with the latest IRS publications to help advocates navigate the new income counting rules. The update features a discussion on calculating MAGI in complex households. NHeLP's accompanying webinar, [The World According to MAGI](#), covers the ins-and-outs of the rules by working through hypothetical family scenarios.

## Looking Ahead to the ACA in 2015

NHeLP filed [comments](#) to HHS' recent Request for Information about the 2015 Letter to Issuers in the Federally Facilitated Marketplace (FFM). The request sets out requirements for insurance plans operating in the FFM in 2015. NHeLP made recommendations to ensure that provider networks are adequate in size and scope, that plans include essential community providers, and that information available to consumers is accessible to people who have difficulty speaking English.

## Advocating for Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities

NHeLP's lawyers and policy experts continue to advocate for older adults and persons with disabilities, ensuring compliance with federal laws. Our latest publications offer insight into pressing issues affecting these communities. The [Q&A on Home and Community Based Settings](#) breaks down recent regulations regarding the definition of what types of settings qualify. The [Mental Health Parity Act issue brief](#) explains how the 2008 law interacts with the Affordable Care Act, CHIP, and Medicaid. And lastly, our overview of recent CMS [guidance on Medicaid Estate Recovery](#)--an issue that has garnered national attention--clarifies concerns for people who are newly eligible for Medicaid under the MAGI rules.

## Reproductive Health

### Defending Women's Health at the Supreme Court



As the Affordable Care Act heads for the Supreme Court for the second time, NHeLP filed an extensive [amicus brief](#) defending the law's birth-control benefit at issue before the court. Joined by 17 of the nation's leading public health and rights organizations and advocates for communities of color, the brief strongly countered arguments that bosses should be able to interfere in employees' personal decisions about using birth control, and placed the benefit squarely within accepted medical practice and decades of federal law. As leaders and experts on the issue, NHeLP, along with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Guttmacher Institute, and the National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, briefed the media on the significant public and

women's health implications of the cases.

## Advancing Reproductive Coverage in California

Although health advocates are battling restrictive laws across the country, California countered the trend with the [California Contraceptive Equity Act](#). Sponsored by NHeLP and the California Family Health Council, it is first in the nation to take much-needed steps to ensure that all people, including men, have access to reproductive care that meets their needs. The bill builds on federal law that requires that insurance companies cover all FDA-approved contraceptives for women without restrictions or co-pays by restricting the ability of insurance companies to limit the types or brands of methods a person chooses. It also brings equity to coverage by making the law gender-neutral.

## Enforcement & Litigation

### Maine Equal Justice Partners Honor Jane Perkins



Jane Perkins received Maine Equal Justice Partners' (MEJP) prestigious 2014 *Equal Justice Hero* award, which honors legal professionals who have made major contributions to strengthening access to justice in Maine. Jane was recognized for her expertise and dedication with MEJP as part of the *Bourgoin v. Mayhew* lawsuit defending the rights of low-income Mainers and those with disabilities. In addition, MEJP called NHeLP: "unsurpassed in its field for providing informative, timely and innovative guidance and legal arguments" -- a true honor!

### Making a Difference in the Lives of California's Youths

Every day NHeLP's work makes a difference in the lives of the nation's most vulnerable and our work in *Katie A v. Bonta* is no exception. NHeLP and co-counsel's work toward a landmark settlement in the case brought needed services to more than 40,000 children in California's foster care system and ushered in systemic reforms that will improve the lives of vulnerable foster youths in the state for years to come. Learn more about the case and what it means for Californians in the California Child Welfare Co-Investment Partnership's [brief](#).

### ***The Medicaid Experts***

As nationally recognized experts, NHeLP travels around the country educating advocates and policy makers about Medicaid and why the program is critical to meeting the needs of vulnerable Americans. NHeLP's Sarah Somers joined a panel of national experts at the National Council on Disability to facilitate cross-disability stakeholder engagement with federal agencies and input on planning and implementing Medicaid managed care. As managed care expands, concerns about quality and access are becoming increasingly important. NHeLP also presented at the Presidential Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS (PACHA), alongside the likes of HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and Cindy Mann, Director of Medicaid and CHIP Services. NHeLP highlighted the role of Medicaid for vulnerable populations and recommended how to protect and improve the program in ACA implementation.