



The National Health Law Program

Turns 50!

Case Statement

Fighting for the Future of Health Rights



A young mother without health insurance

was diagnosed with an aggressive cancer. Her doctor said that her only hope was to start chemotherapy immediately. The hospital would not give her chemotherapy because she had no way to pay for it.

Cancer doesn't wait. She needed health care and she needed it quickly.

Anyone who has faced cancer knows that your life changes in an instant when you get a cancer diagnosis. No one should face that diagnosis without access to health care. The National Health Law Program helped enroll the young mother in Medicaid so she could get chemotherapy. With our help, advocates in every state and DC help people like this young mother every day of the year as they confront obstacles to getting the health care they need.

Case Statement



Parents in Oakland, California were worried that lead exposure was damaging their children's developing brains. If lead exposure is caught early and treated, the impact can be lessened, but California and other states were not testing children's lead levels.

Children are our future; they need health care to succeed and thrive.

The National Health Law Program brought a lawsuit that forced California to test those children for lead exposure, and established the Medicaid requirement that children all over the country receive regular lead testing (including in Flint, Michigan). We have also sued successfully in a number of states to enforce the Medicaid promise of comprehensive health services for low income children, including behavioral health services when children growing up in poverty really need them — early enough to help them succeed in school.



A 30 year-old author could not afford health insurance before the Affordable Care Act (ACA), like tens of millions of Americans who do not get health care or who get inadequate coverage through their work. Thanks to the ACA, 20 million people finally were able to get regular health care, through the health care marketplace and through expanded Medicaid. In the spring of 2017, Congress came very close to scuttling that landmark law.

We should all have health care, regardless of our incomes.

The National Health Law Program fought on Capitol Hill to defend the Affordable Care Act and stop Congress from slashing funding for Medicaid. We won that round, but the battle continues and we will be there to fight back.

Case Statement



A young mother of two wanted to put off having another child so she could finish her college degree. The Affordable Care Act promised that her insurance would pay for contraception but the Supreme Court ruled that employers could reject this federal law if they didn't believe in contraception. The current administration is compounding the injury, allowing health care providers to discriminate against women, LGBTQ individuals, people of color and more on the basis of their personal religion or conscience.

Every woman has the right to make health decisions about her body. Cost should never determine whether or not she gets prenatal and family planning care or is able to terminate a pregnancy.

Federal law has been weakened so the National Health Law Program drafted a model state law to guarantee women and men access to contraception. So far, we have helped enact that law in 11 states! We are also fighting back against “religious refusals” and “conscience refusals” to provide essential health care.

Case Statement



A young HIV positive man had insurance

but his policy priced all of the HIV/AIDS drugs — even the generics — so high that no one could afford them. Other insurers followed suit, sending a clear message that no HIV positive patients need apply.

Discrimination in health care is wrong and illegal.

The National Health Law Program brought a discrimination complaint against the insurance companies and they backed down. Now they offer some of these life-saving drugs at lower costs so that more people who need them can afford them. For 50 years, we have been fighting discrimination against people of color, against women, against immigrants, against people with disabilities, and against LGBTQ individuals. The National Health Law Program helped draft the anti-discrimination language in the ACA and we are enforcing it in court.

Case Statement



A 40 year-old construction worker is able to stay healthy enough to work, despite several medical conditions, because he is enrolled in Medicaid. His hours vary week to week and he has no computer to use to communicate with the state Medicaid office. The current federal administration has encouraged and approved plans aimed at knocking him and potentially millions of other people off of Medicaid by imposing insurmountable hurdles, like requiring him to report every month on the hours he works or lose his insurance.

The purpose of Medicaid is to provide people access to health care, not to take it away.

The National Health Law Program is bringing lawsuits to stop the administration from approving these illegal barriers. We won the first round, but the administration is not backing down; it will continue to advocate for and approve plans that impose health care barriers and we will be there to challenge them.

Case Statement



**Our vision
is of a country
where everyone
has access to the
resources they
need to be healthy.**



We are the National Health Law Program. We support and educate lawyers and other advocates in all 50 states and D.C.; we advocate for federal health policy that ensures access to quality health care for low income people; and if we can't protect health rights through facts and advocacy, we litigate. Our track record in court is strong and we keep fighting until we win. We have 50 years of experience enforcing Medicaid, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and civil rights laws on behalf of the people who need us most.

We have launched a Strategic Action Fund to take us to a future where everyone has access to quality health care.

Our vision is of a country where everyone has access to the resources they need to be healthy. We have work to do to achieve that vision. We have to protect publicly funded health care and then build on it to realize our vision of health equity.

For our 50th anniversary, we are seeking to raise \$2,000,000 in unrestricted funding so that the National Health Law Program will be able to:

- Protect Medicaid and the ACA against administrative sabotage;
- Use the courts to fight back against changes to Medicaid that would make the program unavailable for the people who need it;
- Defend and enhance the gains made in California as leaders in implementing health reform;
- Fight for reproductive and sexual health, at both the state and federal levels;
- Challenge policies that harm immigrants' health;
- Call out the impact of racial and economic disparities on access to health and, with many partners, work to overcome them;
- Support the national movement toward universal coverage by advocating for the specific needs of low income people and people with disabilities.



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