



## Lawyers Alliance Launches Urban Health Program

LAWYERS ALLIANCE SERVES a broad base of nonprofit organizations making New York City a healthier place to live, work, and learn. Continuing our practice of devoting special staff and volunteer attention to areas where nonprofit organizations have a critical role, we recently launched a new program priority: Urban Health. This program is aimed at groups working in the areas of preventative health, food security, healthy aging, and environmental health.

### Preventative Health

Nonprofit organizations are actively engaged in developing, promoting, and protecting lifestyle choices and health policies that improve the health of low-income residents. Lawyers Alliance provides legal support to organizations working to keep New Yorkers healthy through health education programs and health care advocacy. Our specialized work includes guidance about HIPAA and privacy compliance, state regulations related to the employment of licensed professionals, and restrictions and obligations that surround government funding.

**Case Example: Community Health Action of Staten Island (“CHASI”)** provides critical health services and health education to more than 22,000 people. The organization combats HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, and poverty in four permanent locations on Staten Island, in two mobile health units, and through programs in local state prisons, probation offices, and parole centers. Their LGBT Community Center promotes healthy living and wellness by connecting LGBT Staten Islanders to health care providers, resources, and information. Lawyers Alliance has provided legal services to CHASI throughout the life of the organization, including initial incorporation and tax exemption and guidance on employment related legal questions. Currently a pro bono attorney from Dentons US LLP is helping CHASI’s LGBT Center spin off as a self-sustaining not-for-profit corporation.



Photo: Community Health Action of Staten Island

### Food Security

The Food Bank For New York City reports that there are approximately 1.4 million New Yorkers who receive assistance from food banks or soup kitchens. At the same time, the City has disproportionately high rates of diabetes and obesity, and approximately 3 million people lack access to affordable, nutritious food in their neighborhoods. Lawyers Alliance’s clients include food providers, child nutrition education programs, and other groups that support healthy eating.

**Case Example: The Greene Hill Food Co-op’s** mission is to combine healthy, reasonably priced grocery options with cooperative practices in order to provide ethically- and locally-produced food options while respecting suppliers, caring for customers, and participating positively in the local community. Greene Hill is member-owned and operated and embraces the diversity of the Clinton Hill and Fort Greene communities, working to ensure that people from all socio-economic backgrounds have access to the co-operative. Pro bono attorneys at Linklaters LLP provided Greene Hill with legal advice for the financing necessary for opening the storefront co-op, so that it can now operate three days a week.

### Healthy Aging

Since 2004, Lawyers Alliance has focused on providing legal support to elder services organizations. This focus is especially important now, given the intersection of new health care policies and the needs of the city’s elderly. As part of our services, we advise senior centers and other elder services organizations on managed long-term health agreements for social adult day care, subcontracts with partner organizations, and compliance with New York City’s Department for the Aging requirements.

**Case Example:** Since its founding in 1916, **Grand St. Settlement (“GSS”)** has offered a continuum of programs for all ages that support stability and empower growth. This is evident in its work with the Grand Coalition of Seniors; GSS offers an extensive, diverse menu of activities and services while strengthening seniors’ sense of belonging and community. Pepper Hamilton LLP reviewed and is negotiating a contract for a social adult day care program at GSS’s senior center. Their pro bono assistance, including reviewing obligations (beyond programmatic requirements), reimbursement mechanisms, and potential liabilities, will enable GSS to offer a social adult day program to 75 seniors. Additionally, volunteers from Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP are working with GSS to review and update its bylaws.

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## Environmental Health

Healthy living in a densely populated, urban environment poses some challenges. Environmental pollution threatens low-income populations in a unique way, contributing to asthma, lead pollution, and lack of access to green spaces. Nonprofit organizations working to address environmental health challenges benefit from legal assistance related to business law issues, negotiating licensing agreements with the NYC Parks Department, and applicable lobbying regulations.

**Case Example: Bronx River Alliance** protects, improves, and restores the Bronx River corridor and greenway so that they can be healthy ecological, recreational, educational, and economic resources for the communities through which the river flows. Bronx River Alliance received pro bono guidance from Herrick, Feinstein LLP to enable it to advance its advocacy programs, including assistance in complying with federal, state, and local lobbying regulations and reporting.

If your urban health organization needs assistance, please call Senior Staff Attorney **Elizabeth Perez** at (212) 219-1800 ext. 232 or Fellow **Kelsey Ripper** at ext. 276. To volunteer to represent such an organization, contact Pro Bono Manager **Michelle Maloney Friend** at ext. 242.



Photo: Grand St. Settlement

**Elder services organizations support healthy aging.**