

2025 FLORIDA POVERTY HEALTH LAW CONFERENCE AGENDA

*Identifying and Securing the Health Care Rights
of Low Income Floridians*

Keynote & Plenary

Keynote

Keynote speaker Gordon Bonnyman will share why, after 50 years, he still loves working as a poverty health lawyer. He will also discuss the barriers to developing such a practice and how those barriers can be overcome.

Plenary Panel: Innovative Strategies for Poverty Health Law

The landscape of poverty health law is fraught with challenges – from clients not coming to legal aid programs to legal aid programs lacking attorneys experienced in handling Medicaid or Medicare cases. Yet, the need for effective legal advocacy has never been greater. This plenary panel brings together experienced poverty lawyers, an expert from the healthcare provider world, and a pro bono director. Together, they will discuss strategies for helping more low-income Floridians identify and secure their health care rights.

Keynote Speaker



Gordon Bonnyman
Tennessee Justice Center

Moderator



Miriam Hamatz
Of Counsel, Founder
Florida Health Justice Project

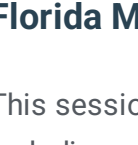
Speakers



Ali Bers
Director, Massachusetts Medicare Advocacy Project
Community Legal Aid



Ronnie Graham
Pro Bono Director
Florida Health Justice Project



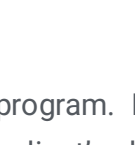
Marissa O'Connor
Senior Managing Attorney, Public Benefits and Veterans
Advocacy
Community Legal Services



Jerson Dulis
Executive Director
Florida Health Justice Project



Jeffrey M. Heame
Chief Advocacy Officer
Legal Services of Greater Miami

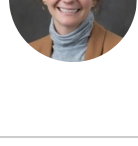


Sarah Somers
Legal Director
National Health Law Program

Florida Medicaid Eligibility 101

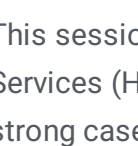
This session will provide an overview of eligibility for Florida's Medicaid program. It will provide practical tools for determining eligibility, including reference to resources that can assist in determining whether a client's eligibility was inappropriately denied or terminated. The panelists will offer tips and tricks for identifying and resolving DCF errors regarding eligibility, how to handle (or assist clients in handling) eligibility appeals, the process for obtaining coverage during appeal, and reinstating coverage that was erroneously terminated.

Moderator

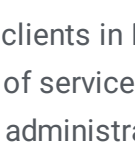


Margaret Kosyk
Supervising Attorney
Florida Health Justice Project

Speakers



Katy DeBriere
Senior Attorney
National Health Law Program



Lynn Hearn
Legal Director
Florida Health Justice Project

Florida's Long-Term Care (LTC) Waiver: Navigating Appeals, Denials, Reductions, and Terminations

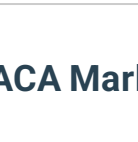
This session will provide advocates with practical tools for representing clients in Medicaid Long-Term Care and Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) appeals, including denials, terminations, and reductions of services. Panelists will walk through how to identify and develop strong cases, prepare clients and evidence for hearings, and navigate the administrative appeals process. Attendees will also receive strategies for client education and outreach to help ensure eligible individuals understand and assert their rights.

Moderator



Nicole La Roque
Borchard Fellow
Florida Health Justice Project

Speakers



Jocelyn Armand
Director of Strategic Partnerships and Advocacy
Legal Services of Greater Miami



Jodi Siegel
Executive Director
Southern Legal Counsel

ACA Marketplace: Overview, Updates, and Tax Issues

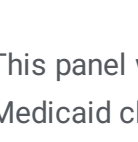
This session will provide an overview of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace, with a focus on recent updates impacting enrollment, coverage options, and special enrollment periods. Panelists will also address common tax-related issues that arise for Marketplace consumers, including reconciliation of premium tax credits and avoiding repayment pitfalls. Attendees will learn practical strategies for assisting clients with eligibility, plan selection, and resolving coverage or tax problems, equipping them to better support low-income Floridians in accessing and maintaining affordable health insurance.

Moderator

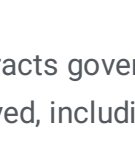


Nicole Licairac
Community Health Specialist
Florida Health Justice Project

Speakers



Mary Ann David
Senior Attorney Health and Income Maintenance
Legal Services of Greater Miami

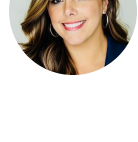


Margaret Kosyk
Supervising Attorney
Florida Health Justice Project

Medicaid Services & Appeals

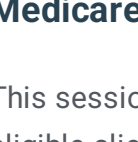
This panel will discuss the Medicaid managed care regulations and contracts governing access to services and practical tools for helping Medicaid clients whose services are denied, terminated, reduced or delayed, including managed care grievances, AHCA complaints, administrative hearings and DCA appeals.

Moderator

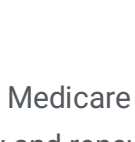


Katy DeBriere
Senior Attorney
National Health Law Program

Speakers



Maria Santi
Founder and Managing Partner
Health and Medicine Law Firm



Sarah Somers
Legal Director
National Health Law Program

Two Hot Medicare Topics: Helping Low-Income Florida Medicare Recipients with Coverage Denial Appeals and Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) Eligibility Issues

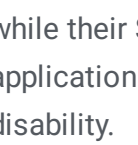
This session will review the basic eligibility requirements and benefits of Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs), share strategies for enrolling eligible clients, and provide updates on how H.R.1 impacts MSP eligibility and renewals in Florida. The session will also cover how to appeal Medicare coverage denials, with a focus on low-income individuals and those with chronic or long-term conditions. Attendees will examine Medicare's administrative appeal system, including appeals involving home health services, prescription drugs, and the "improvement standard." For this session, it is recommended that attendees have a basic understanding of Medicare. Consider watching CMA's Medicare 101 [webinar](#) or FHJP's Legal Basics: Medicare Parts A, B, and C [webinar](#).

Moderator

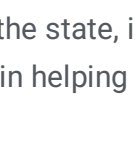


Nicole La Roque
Borchard Fellow
Florida Health Justice Project

Speakers



Ali Bers
Director, Massachusetts Medicare Advocacy Project
Community Legal Aid

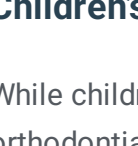


Lynn Hearn
Legal Director
Florida Health Justice Project

Helping Clients with Disabilities Obtain Medicaid

This panel will cover the basics of how to prove your client is disabled, including those applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) with the Social Security Administration (SSA), applicants for Medicaid based on disability applying through the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), as well as individuals who have applied for SSI and been denied but who may still be entitled to review by the state agency while their SSA appeal is pending. Given delays at SSA, applying through the state, including a request for a fair hearing if the Medicaid application has not been timely processed, can be an important strategy in helping clients access health care and cash benefits based on disability.

Moderator



Ronnie Graham
Pro Bono Director
Florida Health Justice Project

Speakers



Kate Lang
Director, Federal Income Security
Justice in Aging



Daniel Rowinsky Quintian
Senior Staff Attorney Health and Income Maintenance
Legal Services of Greater Miami

Children's Medicaid Services: Practical Tools for Helping Children

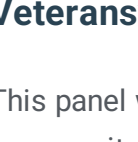
While children on Medicaid have more generous benefits than adults, certain services they need are often hard to access, including PDN, orthodontia, ABA. This panel will discuss how to help children whose prescribed services are denied, reduced, terminated or delayed.

Moderator

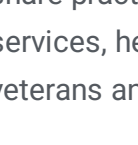


Katy DeBriere
Senior Attorney
National Health Law Program

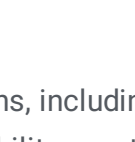
Speakers



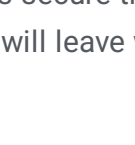
Leigh Markowitz
Managing Attorney
Disability Rights Florida



Sarah Somers
Legal Director
National Health Law Program



Stephen Pitel
Director of Medical-Legal Partnership
Jacksonville Area Legal Aid



Jeron Wheeler
Staff Attorney
Florida Health Justice Project

Veterans' Health Care Access Issues and Advocacy Tools

This panel will explore the unique health care challenges faced by veterans, including navigating VA benefits, discharge upgrades, accessing community-based care, and overcoming barriers related to housing instability, mental health, and social determinants of health. Panelists will share practical advocacy tools, resources, and strategies to help veterans secure the services they need, drawing on their experience in legal services, health care navigation, and community engagement. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of the systems serving veterans and concrete approaches for improving access to care.

Moderator

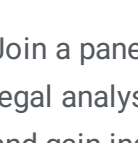


Marissa O'Connor
Senior Managing Attorney, Public Benefits and Veterans Advocacy
Community Legal Services

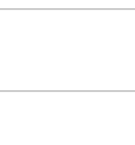
Speakers



Christie Bhageloe
Director, Florida Veterans' Justice Project
Florida Legal Services



Kate Williams
Health Care Navigator
Supportive Services for Veteran Families

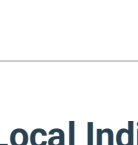


Elizabeth Jackson
Community Engagement & Partnership Coordinator
ARMOR Program, Orlando VA Health Care System

Medicaid Estate Planning

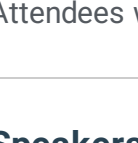
Join a panel of seasoned professionals as they break down Florida Medicaid estate planning through real-world hypotheticals and indepth legal analysis. Learn how key state and federal laws intersect, explore practical strategies for protecting assets while maintaining eligibility, and gain insights from experts with extensive experience in pro bono, legal aid, and policy advocacy. This informative and professional session will equip practitioners with actionable tools to better serve clients navigating complex Medicaid planning issues.

Moderator

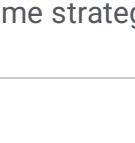


Ronnie Graham
Pro Bono Director
Florida Health Justice Project

Speakers



Natalie Kean
Director, Federal Health Advocacy
Justice in Aging



Jason Neufeld, Esq
Partner
Elder Needs Law, PLLC

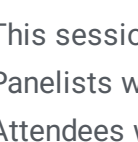
Local Indigent Care

This session will review the legal framework governing Florida's local charity care programs and hospital financial assistance policies. Panelists will share strategies for helping clients access free or reduced cost primary and prenatal care, as well as hospital charity care. Attendees will discuss how to effectively advocate with providers and some strategies and resources for addressing medical debt.

Speakers



Miriam Hamatz
Of Counsel, Founder
Florida Health Justice Project



Aidi Oscariz
Community Engagement & Policy Consultant
Catalyst Miami

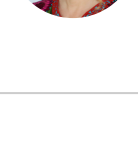


Nicole Licairac
Community Health Specialist
Florida Health Justice Project

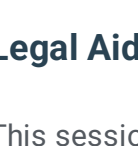
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Miriam Hamatz
Of Counsel, Founder
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Aidi Oscariz
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Catalyst Miami



Nicole Licairac
Community Health Specialist
Florida Health Justice Project

Legal Aid and Pro Bono Perspectives on Elder Law and Client Care

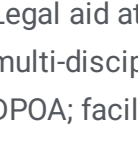
This session will explore the evolving role of elder law attorneys in legal aid and pro bono practice, highlighting how elder law intersects with health law, housing, consumer law, and estate planning. Panelists will share legal standards, practical considerations, and strategies for integrating supportive services to better serve older clients. The discussion will also address guardianship issues and recruiting pro bono attorneys to partner with legal aid and assist with more complex cases.

Moderator



Roger Jackson
Grant Management Coordinator
Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County

Speakers

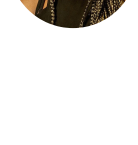


Jerry Leskey
Attorney, Pro Bono Project
Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County

Issues Impacting Long-Term Care Residents: Practical Tools Enhanced by the Collaboration between Legal Aid Advocates and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

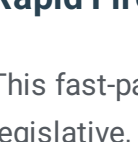
Legal aid attorneys, joined by the Transitions Coordinator and Legal Advocate for the Florida Long-Term Ombudsman Program, will discuss a multi-disciplinary approach to several issues facing long-term care residents, including limitations imposed by guardians or agents with a DPOA; facility administrators' interpretation (and misinterpretation) of residents' rights, and strategies for helping residents obtain medically necessary therapies. Hypotheticals based on actual client fact patterns will be discussed and template notices and responses will be provided.

Moderator

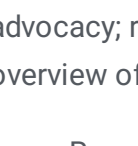


Nicole La Roque
Borchard Fellow
Florida Health Justice Project

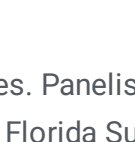
Speakers



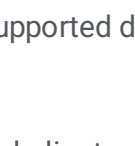
B. Maria Carruba-Fuentes
Senior Staff Attorney
Bay Area Legal Services



Erica Hill
Legal Advocate
Florida Department of Elder Affairs, Long-Term Care
Ombudsman Program



Ellen Cheek
Senior Staff Attorney
Bay Area Legal Services



Tracie Rayfield
Transitions Advocate
Florida Ombudsman Program

Rapid Fire Panel

This fast-paced session will cover a range of relevant topics for advocates. Panelists will provide concise updates on recent administrative, legislative, and litigation changes to Florida's Medicaid program; the new Florida Supreme Court pro bono CLE rule; strategies for assisting immigrants with mental health issues and navigating public charge concerns; Medicaid coverage during emergencies; APD/Budget waiver advocacy; restoration of rights; and guardianship alternatives including supported decision-making. The session will conclude with an overview of new and updated tools for poverty health law attorneys.

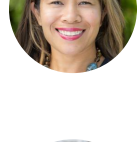
- Recent changes to Florida's Medicaid program that impact individual clients: Katy DeBriere
- New Supreme Court pro bono rule on CLEs: Ronnie Graham
- Understanding public charge issues and concerns: Aleksandra Lopez
- Medicaid & disaster response: coverage during emergencies: Eunice Maling
- APD/Budget waiver: Leigh Markowitz
- Guardian advocacy and supported decision making: Glorian Maziarka
- Restoration of rights: Leigh Markowitz
- Key tools for Florida poverty health law attorneys: Haley Brown
- KidCare updates and issues: Lynn Hearn

Moderator



Lynn Hearn
Legal Director
Florida Health Justice Project

Speakers



Haley Brown
Staff Attorney
Florida Health Justice Project



Ronnie Graham
Pro Bono Director
Florida Health Justice Project



Eunice Maling
Attorney
Legal Services of North Florida

Glorian Maziarka
Children's Health Access Attorney
Florida Legal Services



Katy DeBriere
Senior Attorney
National Health Law Program



Aleksandra Lopez
Attorney - Family Defense Program
Americans for Immigrant Justice



Leigh Markowitz
Managing Attorney
Disability Rights Florida