ABOUT THE NETWORK

NYLPI’s Medical Providers Network (MPN) has a growing number of volunteer professionals who are dedicated to raising awareness of the health crisis in immigration detention. They review medical records, develop advocacy letters, visit individuals in immigration detention facilities, conduct in-person consultations or medical interviews and provide testimony supporting individuals in immigration proceedings.

The power of our volunteers’ expertise can be a force of change and is used to advocate for better care for individuals that are detained, support requests for their release and contribute to strategic, systemic change. Recently, the MPN joined forces with other networks and doctors to oppose the cruel and medically unethical reported practice of forced sterilizations on immigrant women detained at Irwin County Detention Center in Georgia.

MESSAGE FROM THE NYLPI TEAM

Greetings Medical Leaders!

We are excited to share with you our 2020 Fall Newsletter Update for NYLPI’s Medical Providers Network (MPN)! The growing threat of COVID-19, reconciling the impact of systemic racism, and the election cycle has made this fall difficult for everyone, especially the already marginalized client communities we serve. We hope that with the outcome of this presidential election, we can take a collective deep breath, feel reinvigorated and continue to work together to combat the human rights crisis in immigration detention. In the past four months, COVID-19 related protocols have slowed down the court systems and delayed legal proceedings. However, the medical-legal community partnership and the MPN’s crucial work has continued and has aided in the release of five more individuals from ICE custody. We have also expanded our volunteer network, now reaching a total number of 180 members. We thank you for all your hard work and continued commitment to health justice and the protection of human rights.

MESSAGE FROM THE NETWORK’S STEERING COMMITTEE

Dear Colleagues,

There is no doubt that we are living through unprecedented times and facing daunting challenges. In the midst of the worst global health crisis of the century, we are also witnessing the largest uprisings since the civil rights movement, creating opportunity to rebuild and reimagine our collective future. We are so heartened that so many of you have worked together to support NYLPI’s efforts to combat human rights violations in immigration detention, while also caring for the communities you serve.

At the start of the pandemic, we mobilized to sound the alarm about the immediate threat of COVID-19 in immigration jails. In collaboration with Doctors for Camp Closure, we wrote an open letter to ICE demanding the immediate release of all individuals from custody, which had the support of over 6,000 medical professionals from across the country. Most recently, the network supported Freedom for Immigrant’s campaign to stop New Jersey’s Hudson County from renewing contracts with ICE, in an effort to combat mass incarceration and a system of detention that is motivated by profit and deeply rooted in racism and white supremacy. As of this Fall, almost 20% of the individuals we supported in ICE custody were being held in Hudson County Jail, where they faced inhumane conditions.

As members of the MPN’s Steering Committee we are deeply grateful for your commitment, passion, and dedication to improving the lives and quality of health of immigrant communities. The opportunity to support the strategic development of the network has allowed us to grow both as advocates and organizers. We look forward to working alongside all of you in the upcoming months, we have much more work to do to dismantle this inhumane system and end immigration detention.

Dr. Chanelle Diaz
Dr. Jonathan Ross
Dr. Nathaniel Kratz

Danielle Krumholz, Esq.
Dr. Wendy Alfaro
Dr. Jasdeep Mangat
Important Data to Know

- **Case Referrals Received Since January 2020**: 109
- **Medical Pages Reviewed**: 3.8k
- **Case Referrals Received Between July-Mid Nov 2020**: 22
- **Medical Advocacy Letters Written**: 17

Types of Cases

**Criminal Justice Related Cases**
Individuals at risk of COVID-19 complications in NYC jails and prisons.

- **18.2%**

**General Immigration Related Cases**
Individuals detained by ICE in need of mental health competency evaluations, forensic asylum evaluations or other health related advocacy.

- **31.8%**

**Immigration COVID-19 Related Cases**
Individuals in ICE custody in need of medical advocacy due to their elevated risk of COVID-19 related medical complications.

- **50%**

Facilities Breakdown

- **Bergen County Jail**: 36.4%
- **Hudson County Jail**: 13.6%
- **Essex County Jail**: 13.6%
- **Rikers Island Jail**: 9.1%
- **Metropolitan Detention Center**: 9.1%
- **Others**: 18.2%

### Summary of Our Cases

#### The Successful Case of Mrs. Cortes

Mrs. Cortes, a 40-year-old woman, had been detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) at the Bergen County Jail since the beginning of this summer. Our volunteer providers, Dr. Ricky Qadeer, a family medicine physician and credentialed HIV specialist, as well as medical student, Jordan Villars, reviewed Mrs. Cortes's medical records and advocated for her immediate release.

Dr. Qadeer found that Mrs. Cortes had a long history of high cholesterol, a mood disorder, chronic constipation, and a worrisome infection. Although Mrs. Cortes repeatedly complained and requested medical assistance while detained, Dr. Qadeer noted alarming delays in providing the appropriate and required treatment to alleviate her medical conditions and recurring symptoms.

According to Dr. Qadeer's expertise, failure to treat Mrs. Cortes's infections and symptoms represent a significant departure from the standard-of-care she would have received outside of immigration detention. These delays and inadequate responses from ICE significantly increased the risk of Mrs. Cortes's condition worsening and placed her at heightened risk for illness or death if she contracted COVID-19. Soon after Dr. Qadeer's medical advocacy letter was submitted to the court, Mrs. Cortes was released from ICE custody.

### Volunteer Appreciation

**Mariya Masyukova**
MD, MS, AAHIVS

**Family Medicine Physician**
Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Social Medicine
Montefiore Medical Center Albert Einstein College of Medicine

"I am a family medicine physician at Montefiore in the Bronx, grateful to have been part of the medical volunteers network since 2017 and humbled by the tireless work of the NYLPI Health Justice team. I believe health is a human right, and until we dismantle immigration detention and mass incarceration, we will continue to be complicit in these violent systems. We can all play a part in working toward health justice; thank you NYLPI for leading the way!"
A Departure the Standard-of-Care

The Successful Case of Mr. Devon

ICE detained Mr. Devon, a young adult male, at Essex County Jail earlier this fall. His attorney contacted NYLPI seeking the MPN's assistance and medical advocacy.

Dr. Ted Apstein, an emergency medicine physician, took on the case; reviewed Mr. Devon's medical records; wrote a comprehensive medical letter advocating for Mr. Devon's release, and consequently, Mr. Devon was released from ICE custody. While reviewing the medical records, Dr. Apstein found Mr. Devon had a history of elevated transaminases, which is an indicator for serious liver diseases (e.g., hepatitis, cirrhosis, or cancer). Although ICE health staff had evaluated Mr. Devon, Dr. Apstein's review of the records showed that ICE had not appropriately addressed Mr. Devon's elevated transaminases, indicating that he did not receive the standard-of-care that he would have received outside of the detention facility. Failure to receive appropriate medical care could have caused significant health damage, such as liver failure or total organ failure.

Further, Mr. Devon's immunocompromised state also placed him at greater risk of death or lifelong injury if exposed to COVID-19. Thanks to Dr. Apstein's thorough and thoughtful review of Mr. Devon's medical history, this information was brought to light and he was released from ICE custody.

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Dr. Nathaniel Kratz, M.D

Primary Care Physician
Medical Providers Network Steering Committee Member

“...I came to this work because I value human dignity and I believe in justice, and the US mass incarceration system is not compatible with either of those concepts. Getting involved is an easy choice to make when you realize that a failure to act is complicity with a system that is built on racism and the extraction of profit from human suffering. My work as a physician involves not just treating disease, but promoting health, and health and wellbeing and dignity and justice are all connected. I feel that my role in working with the NYLPI MPN is to work to support the courageous people who are leading these efforts to uplift human dignity and end a cruel and unjust system, many of whom are themselves undocumented or incarcerated. The people who are held in cruel conditions by ICE are denied almost everything: freedom, agency, even their own humanity. It is essential for all of us to use our voices and our power to oppose this system and to end it.”

CLIENT OVERVIEW

Gender

We have identified a growing trend in the referrals we have received. Out of 22 cases received between July and Mid November, only 4 were for people who identified as women.

![Gender Graph]

Age

With the threat of COVID-19, NYLPI has identified an increased diversity in the age of the individuals we serve.

![Age Graph]
**Worsening Pulmonary Condition & COVID-19 Risk**

**The Successful Case of Mr. Fall**

ICE detained Mr. Fall, a 40-year-old man, at the Hudson County Jail last winter. Mr. Fall’s attorney contacted NYLPI’s Medical Providers Network to advocate for Mr. Fall’s immediate release due to his ongoing medical conditions and, if exposed to COVID-19, high risk of serious side effects associated with contracting the virus.

NYLPI connected Dr. Joseph Shin, a hospitalist and internal medicine physician, and Crystal Richardson, a medical student, to Mr. Fall’s attorney. The duo quickly coordinated to review Mr. Fall’s medical records and determined that after being confined to immigration detention, Mr. Fall experienced new medical problems, including hypertension and persistent respiratory symptoms. Mr. Fall had sought medical attention from the facility’s health clinic when he experienced worsening bronchitis symptoms, including shortness of breath, coughing, and throat discomfort. The facility’s health staff prescribed Mr. Fall various medications, however, he continued to experience a worsening of his symptoms and the treatments resulted in minimal improvement of his pulmonary condition.

According to Dr. Shin’s expertise, individuals with medical concerns like those of Mr. Fall who contract COVID-19, have high risk of recurring infections and developing more severe complications, including respiratory distress, hypoxia, respiratory failure, and even death at higher rates than other healthy individuals. We are happy to report that Mr. Fall was released from ICE custody in late October, thanks to the legal advocacy of his attorneys at Catholic Migration Services and the medical advocacy from the Network’s Dr. Shin and Crystal Richardson.

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**COVID-19 NUMBERS AT A GLANCE**

People detained by ICE and placed in immigration detention facilities are among the most vulnerable and are at an increased risk of complications and even death if they were to contract COVID-19. Despite the global pandemic and rising rates of infection, ICE continues to unnecessarily detain immigrants, many of whom are elderly and chronically ill.

*The information shown below is limited and based on ICE Detainee Statistics Report as of 11/06/2020.*

**COVID-19 ICE Nationwide Data**

The following demonstrates national data reported by ICE as of 11/06/2020.

- **17,163** Number of Individuals Currently Detained by ICE Nationally
- **59,857** Total Number of Detainees Tested by ICE Since March 2020
- **7,084** Detainees with confirmed COVID-19 Diagnoses Since March 2020
- **409** Detainees with Positive COVID-19 Diagnoses Currently in ICE Custody
- **8** Detainees Who Have Died in ICE Custody Due to COVID-19 Since March 2020

**COVID-19 ICE Regional Data**

The following demonstrates the number of individuals with confirmed COVID-19 diagnoses currently in NY and NJ area facilities.

**By State**

- New York: 70
- New Jersey: 26

**By Facility**

- Batavia County Jail (NY): 50
- Elizabeth County Jail (NJ): 18
- Hudson County Jail (NJ): 14
- Essex County Jail (NJ): 8
- Bergen County Jail (NJ): 6
"As a physician, it can be tempting just to stay in our lane and treat medical problems, but in the face of systemic injustices in the immigration, detention and correctional systems, we have the power to do so much more. Working with NYLPI’s innovative medical-legal-community partnerships has been an empowering and fruitful experience. By using our collective passion, skills and expertise, it’s shown me how we can advocate effectively for individuals, protect human rights, advance health equity and fight for systemic change.
Mr. Young is a young man in his 20s who was detained by ICE in August and held at Bergen County Jail until late October. Our new MPN members, Dr. Altaf Saadi, an attending neurologist, and Dr. Maya Ragavan, a general pediatrician, as well as Danielle Bellavance, a medical student introduced to us by our partners at Doctors for Camp Closure, were connected to the case.

According to their medical records review, Mr. Young sustained blunt force trauma after hitting his head against his steel bunk bed while in ICE custody. Shortly after that, he began to experience ringing in his right ear and difficulty hearing. Although he submitted requests to be evaluated by ICE health staff, and they prescribed medication, his symptoms did not improve. His ear pain worsened leading to hearing loss in his right ear. Failure to provide Mr. Young a proper hearing examination and lack of referral to an ENT specialist alarmed the MPN's doctors.

To make matters worse, the facility ignored Mr. Young's requests for follow-up evaluations and treatment, thus aiding in his declining hearing loss. The doctors demanded the facility provide Mr. Young the adequate standard-of-care for his condition. They also determined the facility's failure to identify the cause for Mr. Young's hearing loss and inadequate treatment could result in permanent hearing loss. Thankfully, the court released Mr. Young shortly after receiving the doctors' medical advocacy letter.

INADEQUATE MEDICAL ATTENTION

The Successful Case of Mr. Young

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CALL TO ACTIONS

Call Pennsylvania Members of Congress to Stop Deportation of Families at Berks

Call Governor Cuomo and the Executive Clemency Bureau to Free Shakoure Charpentier, A U.S. Citizen Detained by ICE.

Sign the Petition to Shut Down the Irwin County Detention Center and End Forced Sterilizations by ICE.

SOLIDARITY EFFORTS

#Safetyforthe28
Stop the Deportation of 28 Children and Their Families

#HonorLivesLost
Online Weekly Candle-Lighting Ritual to #FreeThemAll

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Upcoming Webinar
Beyond "Abolish ICE": Abolition in the Immigration Context
Nov. 24, 2020 at 6:30-8:00pm

Upcoming Training
Training For Advocates, Organizers and Community Members on Know Your Rights: ICE raids
Dec. 3, 2020 at 4:00 PM

NYLPI NEWS

NJ District Court Denies Dismissal of NYLPI Client’s Civil Rights Case
October 5, 2020

NYLPI Wins NYPD Administrative FOIL Appeal Against NYPD
November 5, 2020

NYLPI Hosts Sunset Park COVID-19 Town Halls
October 8, 2020

NYLPI Launches Community Surveying Initiative to Address Police Brutality
August 27, 2020

RELEVANT HEADLINES

INSIDER NJ: Immigrant Rights Groups Call on Hudson County Freeholders to End Contract With ICE
November 18, 2020

THE GUARDIAN: At least 19 women allege medical abuse at Ice detention center in Georgia
October 25, 2020

10 NEWS: Local expert explains challenges of reuniting hundreds of migrant children with parents
November 17, 2020

BORGEN MAGAZINE: The Real Border Crisis: Childhood Trauma from Family Separations
November 16, 2020

WINK NEWS: Biden plans sweeping reversal of Trump’s immigration agenda, from deportations to asylum policy
November 13, 2020

November 16, 2020