New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Spring 2021 Report of the NYLPI Medical Providers Network

January - April 2021

NYLPI.ORG
NYLPI’s Medical Providers Network (MPN) has a growing number of volunteer healthcare 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 people who are detained, support requests for their release and contribute to strategic, systemic change. Throughout the past year and into 2021, our Medical Providers Network, in collaboration with our community partners, has participated in and supported advocacy to demand change. Below are some of the policy initiatives the MPN supported:

- Called on the Biden Administration to prioritize the release of individuals who face a heightened risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19 due to age or a medical condition as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as transgender people, people living with HIV+ and all families and children.

- Requested the federal administration affirmatively implement a file review process for every person in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody, operating under a presumption of release for everyone.

- Engaged in various organizing efforts to change state policy and end all contracts between ICE and county and state jails and correctional facilities, with the goal of ending immigration detention in New York State and New Jersey.

### ABOUT THE NETWORK

### THE REFERRAL PROCESS

- **Attorney reaches out to NYLPI**
- **NYLPI receives referral email**
- **Client’s Data & Medical Records received**
- **NYLPI reaches out to network and connects with volunteer**
- **Medical volunteer connected to the case**
  - Medical volunteer reviews available medical records and or visits client in detention for a consultation
  - Volunteer writes medical advocacy letter
  - NYLPI Staff sends the medical letter to the client’s attorney
  - Attorney receives the final medical letter and submits it to the court
Greetings Medical Leaders!

We are excited to share with you our 2021 Spring Newsletter for NYLPI’s Medical Providers Network (MPN)! We hope that this year marks a new chapter and provides us with an opportunity to take a collective deep breath and recharge. Although we are heartened by steps the Biden Administration has taken to shift the U.S. immigration system towards a framework that embraces human rights, dignity and compassion, there are thousands of adults, children and families who continue to suffer in detention in New York, New Jersey and around the nation.

At the height of the pandemic last year, the MPN responded to increased demand for medical advocacy on behalf of people in detention at risk of severe complications if infected by COVID-19, and the MPN quickly and thoughtfully adapted to meet that need. As vaccination eligibility and distribution has expanded, our medical volunteers continue to support and join the efforts of community advocates, legal groups and others to demand the release of all individuals from immigration detention. In the past three months alone, the MPN’s crucial work has contributed to the release of four more people from ICE custody, and over 40 people were released in 2020.

We are also pleased that the MPN has expanded to over 200 members, including medical students and licensed medical providers. We thank you for all your hard work and continued commitment to health justice and the protection of human rights.

---

**SPRING 2021 SUMMARY OF OUR CASES**

**Important Data to Know**

- **47** Case referrals received from January through April
- **4** Individuals released from area immigration detention facilities and jails
- **30** "COVID-19 Related Risks" medical advocacy letters written to support people in ICE custody and NYC jails
- **4** Virtual forensic and mental health evaluations conducted via video or phone
- **2K+** Over 2,000 pages of medical records reviewed and analyzed by volunteers

**Types of Cases Received in 2021**

**Immigration Related Cases**

Individuals detained by ICE in need of mental health competency evaluations, forensic asylum evaluations or other health related advocacy:

- **26%**

**Immigration COVID-19 Related Cases**

Individuals in ICE custody in need of medical advocacy due to their elevated risk for COVID-19 related medical complications:

- **36%**

**Criminal Justice Related Cases**

Individuals in NYC jails and prisons in need of medical advocacy due to their elevated risk for COVID-19 related medical complications:

- **38%**
The clients referred to NYLPI have a variety of complex, chronic and unique health conditions that are further exacerbated by detention. The following conditions were the most frequently identified by the MPN and found to be inadequately treated.

**Mental health conditions and disorders:**
- Psychiatric Disorder
- Bipolar Disorder
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Anxiety, Depression, Mood Disorder

**Conditions that lead to cardiovascular diseases and worsening health outcomes:**
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Hypertension
- Hyperlipidemia
- High Cholesterol and Blood Pressure

**Pulmonary diseases that elevate COVID-19 related risks:**
- Asthma
- Pneumonia
- Respiratory infections
- Smoking history

**Other conditions and immunodeficiency diseases:**
- Epilepsy and Seizures
- HIV / AIDS
- Hepatitis C and B
- Kidney Disease
- Sleep Apnea / COPD

---

**AGE & GENDER OF CLIENTS REFERRED TO THE MPN**

Most of the individuals referred to NYLPI for medical advocacy are adults who identify as male between the ages of 18 to 70 years old. During spring of 2021, the MPN has also provided medical advocacy for three transgender women in ICE custody.

---

**FACILITY BREAKDOWN FOR SPRING 2021**

The MPN provided advocacy for individuals being held in the following jails and detention facilities.

- **Rikers island Jail Complex**: 29%
- **Bergen County Jail**: 24%
- **Hudson County Jail**: 14%
- **Other NYC Jails**: 6%
- **Orange County Jail**: 4%
- **Elizabeth County Jail**: 4%
- **Buffalo Processing Center (Batavia)**: 2%
Mr. Castillo’s Case
A Seriously Ill Father from Queens at Risk of Death in ICE Custody at Orange County Jail in New York

NYLPI mobilized our Medical Providers Network in February to provide urgently needed medical advocacy to support Edward Alonso Castillo’s request for release from ICE custody.

“On January 28th, while on his way to work, Mr. Edward Alonso Castillo, a 48-year-old long-time Queens resident and co-owner of a family business in Long Island, was suddenly arrested by ICE,” our partners at Make the Road NY stated during a NY1 News Report highlighting this case. “Mr. Castillo first came to the U.S. as a teenager and has lived in the United States for many years. He co-owns a successful business on Long Island, Babylon Bagel, with his partner, Rocio.”

Make the Road New York contacted NYLPI seeking medical advocacy, and MPN volunteers Dr. Katharine Lamperti and Katie DeWilde worked on the case. They determined that continued ICE confinement placed Mr. Castillo at high risk for serious health complications, and possibly death, if infected by COVID-19, and supported Mr. Castillo’s request to be released. Based on their review of Mr. Castillo’s medical history, Dr. Lamperti was alarmed that ICE and the immigration facility’s staff continuously withheld and denied Mr. Castillo adequate medical care, including necessary treatment for his underlying medical conditions. Dr. Lamperti joined Make the Road NY, NYLPI and other community groups and community members to demand that ICE immediately release Mr. Castillo from immigration detention.

On March 19, Mr. Castillo was finally reunited with his family, and even surprised his partner Rocio at their bagel shop with flowers and a big hug. His release followed multiple urgent requests by the legal and organizing teams at Make the Road NY and the MPN’s medical advocacy, along with the support of 1,000 community members who signed the petition to #FreeAlonso.

“I am so happy to be back home with my family. While detained, my health was deteriorating, and I knew that they could not give me the care that I needed. Every day, I worried about my health and did not know if I was going to be able to see my family again. I am so thankful for the incredible support I received for my release. Now I am home with my family, and I am able to get the proper medical attention that I need.” -Edward Alonso Castillo

Watch the NY1 News report featuring MPN volunteer Dr. Katharine Lamperti here.
ALARMING TRENDS IDENTIFIED IN DETENTION FACILITIES AND NYC JAILS IN 2020 - 2021

- In the past 4 months, we have seen an increase of cases in which clients have been detained for more than two years.

- Clients have experienced rapidly worsening preexisting conditions and have been diagnosed with new conditions while in detention.

- Transgender people in ICE custody have not been provided necessary continuing hormone treatments in detention, which can harm the health of transgender people.

- Transgender, queer and nonbinary people in ICE custody have reported long-lasting impacts of trauma due to discrimination and sexual assault both in ICE custody and in community settings.

- People with diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity and other conditions that place them at risk of developing cardiovascular diseases are not provided with proper diets and frequent opportunities to exercise, which is medically required to manage and control their conditions.

- People with lung diseases, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or sleep apnea (OSA), are not provided access to continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy machines, that are used to help alleviate sudden, intense symptoms and help individuals breathe more easily during sleep and keep their oxygen levels up.

- People continue to be detained in communal, overcrowded settings, such as dorms, where the spread of COVID-19 is uncontrolled.

- People continue to experience unnecessary delays in receiving medical treatment, follow-up medical evaluations and screenings, and continue to have their requests or sick calls ignored.

- People in immigration detention with limited English language proficiency are not provided with professional interpretation or translation, which is required for individuals to understand their medical diagnosis, health evaluations, medical care and treatment instructions.

- Immigration detention facilities and NYC jails are failing to monitor mental health conditions, provide counseling, therapy or necessary medication.

- Hunger strikers in immigration detention are being punished by facility staff through solitary confinement, under the pretext of “necessary medical observation.” Medical staff at the facilities have threatened many hunger strikers with force feeding and failed to provide adequate medical support including psychological care and physical monitoring.
Ms. Jo’s Hunger Strike Experience at the Buffalo Processing Center

Ms. Jo’s case was referred to NYLPI by our partners at the Abolish ICE NY & NJ coalition, seeking medical advocacy and support. Dr. Kate Sugarman, a passionate and dedicated member of the MPN, volunteered to review Ms. Jo’s medical history and joined countless community and legal advocates in the efforts to demand the immediate release of Ms. Jo from ICE custody. Ms. Jo identifies as female and was detained at the Buffalo Processing Center (Batavia) located in Upstate New York. At that time, she had been on a hunger strike for 25 days.

Based on her review of Ms. Jo’s medical history, Dr. Sugarman found that Ms. Jo had a history of serious mental health conditions that had not been properly addressed or treated during her confinement at Batavia Detention Center. Ms. Jo’s symptoms of depression, psychosis, and PTSD were exacerbated while she was detained, damaging her overall well-being and mental and emotional stability. Her complex array of medical and mental health concerns also placed Ms. Jo in a vulnerable, high-risk state for contracting COVID-19, and for experiencing other complications.

While in detention, Ms. Jo was not offered adequate mental health counseling. Though she had access to the staff psychiatrist, she was not offered therapy or more in-depth counseling sessions. Alarmingly, during her on-site visits with the clinical staff, Ms. Jo, who speaks Spanish and does not speak nor understand English, was not provided proper medical translation and interpretation services, a clear violation of medical standards of care, with legal implications as well. The detention center and ICE have an obligation to provide all patients with a professional interpreter, when necessary, for each interaction with a healthcare provider. They failed to meet their obligations.

Dr. Sugarman also found it concerning that Ms. Jo did not feel safe using her preferred name and gender pronouns while in immigration detention, which is detrimental to her health. The use of proper pronouns and chosen names when addressing transgender or nonbinary people is associated with better mental health and physical health outcomes. This is one of the main concerns that inspired NYLPI to launch the UndocuCare TGNCI+ program that provides direct legal services to transgender, gender-nonconforming, intersex (TGNCI) and undocumented individuals living with HIV.

Ms. Jo was on a hunger strike for more than a month while in custody. During that time, her mental and physical health rapidly deteriorated, and she still did not receive the mental health care she needed. Ms. Jo’s weight loss was extreme; in less than one month she lost more than 15 pounds, causing her to be malnourished, dehydrated and hypotensive. According to Dr. Sugarman’s expertise, due to the malnutrition she experienced, Ms. Jo was at higher risk of developing brain, heart and other organ damage, alongside serious side effects or death if she contracted COVID-19 while in immigration detention.

Ms. Jo was also placed in “medical segregation,” purportedly for monitoring, for over a month. The staff at the facility kept Ms. Jo in complete isolation, which served no medical function and further harmed her physical and mental health, raising the issue of potential unlawful punishment for participating in a hunger strike. ICE’s own policies prohibit the use of administrative segregation, and international human rights standards prohibit the use of solitary confinement. According to the United Nations, solitary confinement “can amount to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment... when used as a punishment, during pre-trial detention, indefinitely or for a prolonged period, for persons with mental disabilities.”

Dr. Sugarman advocated for Ms. Jo’s immediate release from ICE custody, and thankfully, within hours of Dr. Sugarman’s medical advocacy letter being submitted and following Ms. Jo’s bold exercise of her rights to continue hunger striking in detention, she was released. We applaud the dedication of Dr. Sugarman, Ms. Jo’s legal team at the Bronx Defenders and the Abolish ICE NY & NJ Coalition’s advocates for their relentless efforts, that together helped secure Ms. Jo’s release.
2020 SUMMARY OF OUR CASES

Important Data to Know

130 Case referrals received in 2020
42 Individuals released from area immigration detention facilities and jails
88 “COVID-19 Related Risks” medical advocacy letters written to support people in ICE custody and NYC jails
7 Virtual forensic and mental health evaluations conducted via video or phone
19 Medical advocacy letters written to support the release of people in ICE and NYC jails
15K+ Over 15,000 pages of medical records reviewed and analyzed by volunteers

Types of Cases Received in 2021

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

- 26%

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

- 32%

Criminal Justice-Related Cases
Individuals in NYC jails and prisons in need of medical advocacy due to their elevated risk for COVID-19 related medical complications:

- 42%

Facility Breakdown for 2020

The MPN provided advocacy for individuals being held in the following jails and detention facilities in 2020.

- Rikers Island Jail: 27%
- Manhattan Detention Complex: 19%
- Hudson County Jail: 17%
- Essex County Jail: 8%
- Bergen County Jail: 5%
- Vernon C. Bain Correctional Center: 5%
- Other NYC Jails: 15%
- Other ICE Detention Centers: 4%

“I began volunteering for the Medical Providers Network alongside NYLPI thanks to Lianna Drobatz, one of my closest friends and biggest role models. I was outraged by the cruelty and injustice that our country inflicts upon its most vulnerable people, but I felt powerless, thinking I did not have the knowledge or stature to help as just one medical student. This work has given me a valuable community and a productive outlet – standing up for what’s right with so many dedicated advocates is a considerable improvement over getting mad in my apartment by myself. Our diverse experiences and skills illustrate that anyone can play an important role in fighting injustice, no matter their area of expertise or level of education. All you need to know is that you are willing to fight the good fight.”

Greg Lopez
Sidney Kimmel Medical College
Incoming Brown/Hasbro Pediatrics Resident
Katherine Lamperti
MD, HMDC
Physician,
Anesthesiology and Hospice Medical Direction
EvergreenHealth

"We are witness to so much suffering in the world that is outside of our control, yet the treatment of immigrants detained in the US is within our power to change. My interest in this work was sparked several years ago by the plight of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. I am grateful for the opportunity to volunteer with NYLPI as it allows me to use my medical training to help advocate for justice in a very concrete and way. I would absolutely encourage all providers who are interested in this work to give it a try. We are very well supported by the NYLPI staff and lawyers - and especially the medical students."

Amrita Seehra
MD, MPH, AAHIVS
Physician,
Family Medicine
Montefiore Bronx Health Collective

“It has truly been an honor and privilege to be a part of the NYLPI Medical Providers Network. As a family physician and someone with personal experience with incarceration, I have witnessed the violence of immigrant detention and incarceration on individuals, families, and communities. While my clinical work allows me to provide direct health care, NYLPI has allowed me the opportunity to address health within the context of justice. I am humbled to work with and in support of other like-minded advocates who are committed to dismantling and abolishing these oppressive systems.”
Volunteering Perks

Expand your network by collaborating in complex cases with volunteers outside your institution.

Delve into immigration advocacy by attending
- Forums
- Conventions
- Panel discussions

Join other volunteers in community events
- Solidarity walks
- Rallies
- Protests

Enhance your skills by attending
- Workshops
- Trainings
- Webinars

Join our organizing efforts by
- Recruiting and motivating new volunteers
- Supervise and train new recruits

Delve into media and public relations by
- Co-authoring op-eds and reports with NYLPI
- Speaking on panels

Qais Iqbal  
Sidney Kimmel Medical College

“Being in medicine, I feel privileged to be able to comprehend dense medical information and to communicate about it with trust. It is an honor to work with NYLPI to advocate for the health and safety of incarcerated individuals who, I firmly believe, are not being rehabilitated or aided by the current American incarceration system. Using our time, education, and privilege to help those who are stripped of their voice and agency is one of the fundamental reasons I wanted to pursue medicine and it continues to be a priority for me. Working with Mia Soto and with the physicians in the network has been a well-organized and rewarding experience and I am grateful to be a part of it. I am excited to continue with this work and would encourage all those who are able to contribute however they can!”

Michael Gonzalez  
University of Illinois College of Medicine

“My frustration with the medical difficulties incarcerated and detained folks face in our broken carceral and immigration system, led me to a webinar by Physicians for Human Rights, highlighting Dr. Kate Sugarman’s advocacy work. After the webinar, I knew I wanted to get involved. I was connected to NYLPI’s Medical Providers Network through Doctors for Camp Closure’s (D4CC) medical student group. NYLPI has given me an avenue to work toward some type of justice for individuals as they advocate for assistance. Through this work, I have gotten to work with the clients, their lawyers, and volunteer physicians in a much-needed collaborative effort. I will continue this work throughout my career. NYLPI has given me a powerful use for my medical skills and knowledge. One that shows me the great amount of work that still needs to be done, but also brings me in community with the amazing folks working towards justice and reform.”
Advocates Demand the Immediate Release of Mr. Marvin Reyes Ventura, Seriously Ill Hunger Striker in Immigration Custody

The MPN joined advocates across the state to call on ICE to release Mr. Reyes from the Krome Processing Center in Miami, Florida after his transfer from a New Jersey area facility. Mr. Reyes has been in ICE custody since November 2019, and has been on hunger strike since March 7th, 2021, fighting for his release from detention. ICE was seeking to force feed him in violation of Mr. Reyes’ rights to protest and to bodily autonomy. Read more about Mr. Reyes' situation here.

The following are some of the MPN's advocacy efforts, including sign-on letters, petitions and demands for local, state and federal governments to end the continued detention of all people in ICE custody and the abusive policies that criminalize immigrants. If you are interested in learning more about any of these actions, please reach out to Mia Soto, NYLPI Community Health Justice Organizer at msoto@nylpi.org.

2021

Advocates Demand the Immediate Release of Mr. Marvin Reyes Ventura, Seriously Ill Hunger Striker in Immigration Custody

The MPN joined advocates across the state to call on ICE to release Mr. Reyes from the Krome Processing Center in Miami, Florida after his transfer from a New Jersey area facility. Mr. Reyes has been in ICE custody since November 2019, and has been on hunger strike since March 7th, 2021, fighting for his release from detention. ICE was seeking to force feed him in violation of Mr. Reyes’ rights to protest and to bodily autonomy. Read more about Mr. Reyes’ situation here.

NYLPI’s MPN with Coalition Partners Urge the New York State Legislature to Pass the Dignity Not Detention Act

For years, New York has been complicit in the incarceration of immigrants, resulting in the separation of families and the terrorizing of immigrant communities through dangerous policing tactics, like the raids that have left individuals seriously injured, scared and at times traumatized due to the unnecessary violent force that undercover ICE agents have used to detain innocent people. The MPN joined countless community advocates and legal partners to urge the New York State legislature to pass the Dignity Not Detention Act, and end immigration detention contracts between ICE and New York County jails, correctional facilities and all government facilities across the state. If passed, the bill would prohibit localities within New York State from entering or expanding existing contracts with the federal government for the purposes of immigration detention and requires localities with existing contracts to execute their termination clauses – getting New York out of the business of immigration detention. Read the full statement here, and call on your local representative to get this Act passed now!
NYLPI and the MPN joined Partners at the Abolish ICE New York & New Jersey Coalition to call on New York State to Immediately Stop Its Cooperation with ICE

The MPN joined hundreds of community advocates in an open letter addressed to Governor Cuomo and the New York State legislature to halt the expansion of immigrant detention in New York by prohibiting cities, counties, municipalities, and law enforcement agencies from entering into or renewing contracts with ICE for the purpose of detaining people in civil immigration custody. The letter demands an end to transfers between ICE custody and county jails and other facilities, either by executive order or through passage of the New York For All Act; parole to be granted to immigrants incarcerated in state custody without being transferred to ICE custody; as well as clemency for elderly people and people with underlying health conditions in prisons. Read the full letter here.

Immigrant Rights Advocacy Organizations Demand Biden Administration Take Action During the First 100 Days to End Family Separation and Other Harmful Policies

The MPN joined hundreds of community advocates in an open letter addressed to Governor Cuomo and the New York State legislature to halt the expansion of immigrant detention in New York by prohibiting cities, counties, municipalities, and law enforcement agencies from entering into or renewing contracts with ICE for the purpose of detaining people in civil immigration custody. The letter demands an end to transfers between ICE custody and county jails and other facilities, either by executive order or through passage of the New York For All Act; parole to be granted to immigrants incarcerated in state custody without being transferred to ICE custody; as well as clemency for elderly people and people with underlying health conditions in prisons. Read the full letter here.

The MPN Joined Countless NGOs, Advocates and Service Providers to Call on U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and ICE to Ensure 14,000 People in Detention are Prioritized for Release as New DHS Enforcement Priorities are Implemented

The MPN joined The National Immigrant Justice Center, American Immigration Council, Detention Watch Network, The National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers Guild, Catholic Legal Immigration Network and countless other NGOs, legal and medical service providers and advocates for people in immigration detention, to call on ICE and DHS to ensure that the thousands of families and individuals currently in ICE custody are being prioritized for release. The letter urges ICE to implement an affirmative file review of every person in custody, utilizing a presumption of release, with a process for review and escalation. It also highlights the dangerous and continuing threat of COVID-19 faced by people who are incarcerated or detained. Read the full letter here.

2020

Medical Providers Network and Doctors for Camp Closure, Alongside Over 6,000 Medical Advocates Across the Nation, Urge ICE to Release All Immigrants from Custody Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

Clinicians from the MPN and D4CC wrote an open letter to ICE, signed by over 6,000 medical advocates throughout the nation, to demand that ICE officials release individuals and families from immigration detention while their legal cases are being processed and to implement community-based alternatives to detention to alleviate the mass overcrowding in detention facilities, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate the harm of an outbreak. Read the full letter here.

Advocates Demand Emergency Measures to Stop the Spread of COVID-19 in New Jersey Immigration Detention Centers

Over one hundred organizations, alongside the MPN, called on ICE’s Newark Field Office to release all immigrants currently detained by ICE in the state of New Jersey in addition to suspending all ICE check-ins, enforcement activity, deportation and transfers of detainees, towards reducing the devastating impact of COVID-19. Read the full letter here.
MPN Supports the Demand to Stop Hudson County from Contracting with ICE to Incarcerate People

The MPN joined a statement from a dozen organizations in support of communities harmed by the current contract between Hudson County and ICE that detains immigrants at the Hudson County Correctional Facility. At Hudson, incarcerated people have faced inhumane conditions, including egregious medical neglect, punitive isolation and preventable death. The COVID-19 pandemic has merely exacerbated the cruelty of these conditions and has proven that, while there have been improvements in the medical unit, these improvements are not sufficient. Read the full statement here.

MPN Joined Friend-of-the-Court Brief Seeking Release of People in ICE Custody

In the earlier months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Medical Providers Network, alongside the Mount Sinai Human Rights Program, White Coats for Black Lives, and other individual healthcare professionals, joined a friend-of-the-court brief supporting federal litigation seeking the release of people confined to the Elizabeth immigration detention facility in New Jersey. The brief specifically highlighted the wide-ranging public health consequences of the pandemic and given the demonstrated presence of COVID-19 in detention settings, explained how ICE's continued detention of immigrants in the Elizabeth Detention Center posed a serious and concrete threat to the public health in New Jersey. The brief was aimed at the crucial importance of the court's understanding of COVID-19, its dangers and the overall public health crisis. Read the full brief here.

RESOURCES & TRAININGS

NYLPI Resources for Volunteers

NYLPI’s Health Justice team has researched and developed the following resources for the Medical Providers Network’s volunteers as they engage in medical advocacy and additional efforts to advocate for individuals in immigration detention and in jails. If you are interested in learning more about the following resources or have additional questions you would like us to research, please contact Mia Soto, NYLPI Community Health Justice Organizer at msoto@nylpi.org.

Medical Network Activism & Your Right to Protest

Healthcare providers may wish to participate in political activism both as private citizens and in their role as physicians. These activities may include joining in person public protests, rallies or vigils, as well as participating in virtual actions such as phone zaps, providing testimony and other activities. Political protest is a constitutionally protected right, but there may be limitations to those protections. Medical providers may wish to consult with their individual employers before such participation. If you have any questions or concerns relating to this matter, please reach out to NYLPI to learn more.

Public Speaking & Media Support

Many volunteers in the Medical Providers Network may also wish to engage in public speaking, media and political advocacy. NYLPI encourages medical network volunteers to consider their ability to become bold advocates and to use the power of the medical profession to seek systemic change. NYLPI welcomes discussions with MPN members about public speaking, media advocacy, and more.
NYLPI: Dismantling Racism: Protester Safety & Health During the Pandemic

Thinking about protesting or joining a community action? Check out our webinar on how to minimize the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19 during a protest, and get information about your legal rights and available health and legal services that are free. You can check out our webinar or read our Protester Health & Safety Resource Guide.

Physicians for Human Rights Asylum Evaluation Online Trainings

Physicians for Human Rights' Asylum Program offers basic and advanced trainings for health professionals to learn how to apply their clinical skills to support asylum applications. Check out PHR's Asylum Network Trainings page for upcoming virtual and in-person trainings.

Recorded Webinar: Informational Training on Criminal Proceedings for Medical Providers Network by Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem

In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, our Medical Provider Network expanded its work to advocate for the immediate release of people in New York City area jails, who may be at heightened risk for serious health complications should they contract the coronavirus.

NYLPI was joined by Elizabeth Fischer, Esq., Interim Managing Attorney of the Criminal Defense Practice at the Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, for a virtual informational training and discussion on how the Medical Provider Network's advocacy has a critical role in securing the release of dangerously ill and at-risk individuals from NYC jails.

Are you interested in learning more about the criminal legal system and the role of medical advocacy in criminal proceedings? Reach out to Mia Soto, NYLPI Community Health Justice Organizer at msoto@nylpi.org to get access to our webinar.

NEW YORK LAWYERS FOR THE PUBLIC INTEREST (NYLPI)

About NYLPI

For more than 40 years, NYLPI has been a leading civil rights advocate partnering with communities fighting a legacy of marginalization on the basis of race, immigration status, poverty, neighborhood pollution, and disabilities. NYLPI pioneered the practice of community lawyering in the five boroughs of New York City. These communities shape our priorities, and their struggles for justice demand innovative solutions. Our interdisciplinary teams of advocates use every tool available – community organizing, impact litigation and individual representation, policy advocacy, media, pro bono partnerships, and public education – to solve seemingly intractable problems, develop leaders, and build collective power to achieve justice. We strive to create equal access to health care, achieve equality of opportunity and self-determination for people with disabilities, ensure immigrant opportunity, strengthen local nonprofits, and secure environmental justice for disadvantaged communities.

To learn more about NYLPI, visit www.nylpi.org.