Hello All,

We hope you are all well and have enjoyed the summer so far. As we progress through the warmer months, we wanted to ensure that our network’s efforts in the fight to abolish unjust immigration enforcement policies and to address the human rights crisis in detention are both recognized and appreciated, especially after all that has happened in the past couple of months in the immigration landscape.

In the beginning of 2022, we finally witnessed a significant step in the movement towards abolishing the detention of people, as the remaining detention facilities in New Jersey finally closed. However, due to the shutdown of these detention centers, many of our community members were transferred across state lines, some farther away than others. Many immigrants detained in NJ facilities were moved to New York based facilities, including the Buffalo Processing Center and Orange County Correctional Facility, located in Goshen, New York.

Unfortunately, the immigration crisis has only worsened in New York State, as U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials made a groundless and unexpected decision to transfer innocent immigrants from local facilities to unknown locations in the country.

Although COVID-19 continues to pose a dangerous risk to people in ICE custody, especially those with pre-existing and chronic health conditions, the irresponsible and frequent transfers of detained people between facilities elevate their risk for health complications and continue to worsen the ongoing public health crisis. To make matters worse, as vaccination rates increase in detention settings legal and community advocates have expressed that the court system no longer views the pandemic and virus as a real-time threat, even though people report that they have experienced delays in receiving the vaccines and are now facing limited access to booster shots. It is important to also remember that these detention facilities are already crowded, unsanitary, lacking in adequate access to hygienic materials such as soap or hand sanitizers, and have continuously failed to adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 safety guidelines.

Last year, the Network had a higher caseload of COVID-19 specific referrals for medical advocacy letters than this year, and as a result 10 people were released from area detention facilities and jails. This year, we have seen a drastic decline in COVID-19 specific referrals and have received an increase in asylum-related requests involving forensic and/or mental health evaluations. This higher demand for trained licensed physicians and mental health providers, available to provide expert evaluations for asylum cases, has motivated our increased volunteer recruitment efforts, as we have reached a grand total of 255 members.

Nevertheless, we continue our search for mental health professionals and look forward to welcoming new and motivated volunteers into the work. To this end, we kindly ask for your assistance in helping us reach and recruit more providers and medical students alike; please share information about NYLPI’s Medical Providers Network (MPN) with your colleagues and institutions.

Thank You.
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. As of August 1st, our network has 255 volunteers, including licensed doctors, medical students, nurse practitioners, licensed social workers and mental health providers. Our volunteers 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, supports requests for their release and contributes to strategic, systemic change.

**Breakdown of the Network:**
- Total Volunteers: 255
- Licensed Physicians: 110
- Medical Students & Residents: 118
- Licensed Mental Health Providers: 20
- Nurse Practitioners, Social Workers & Other Advocates: 7

**Languages Spoken by Volunteers:**
- English
- Spanish
- Mandarin
- Vietnamese
- French
- German
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Hebrew
- Hindi
- Punjabi
- Urdu
- Bengali
- Arabic
- Haitian Creole
- Igbo

**Expertise & Specialties in the Network:**
- Internal Medicine, Family Medicine and Emergency Medicine
- Pediatrics, Pediatric Hospitalist, Pediatric Endocrinology, Neonatal Care
- Cardiology, Endocrinology, Gastroenterology, Dermatology,
- Oncology, Radiation Oncology
- Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Dermatology
- Neurology
- Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Addiction Medicine
- Infectious Diseases, HIV Specialist
- Trauma Surgery, Transplant Surgery and Hepato-Pancreato-Biliary (HPB) Surgery
- Hospitalist and Palliative Care
A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR MEDICAL ADVOCACY

TYPES OF CASE REFERRALS THE NETWORK RECEIVES

- **Immigration Related Referral Support:** Individuals detained by ICE in need of mental health competency evaluations, forensic asylum evaluations or other health related advocacy.

- **COVID-19 Specific Referral Support**
  Individuals in ICE custody in need of medical advocacy due to their elevated risk for COVID-19 related medical complications.

- **Criminal Justice Referral Support**
  Individuals in NYC jails and prisons in need of medical advocacy due to their elevated risk for COVID-19 related medical complications.

EXPANSION OF OUR NETWORKS' SERVICES IN 2022

As a community driven and led network, we continuously look to our communities, organizational members and fellow advocates to define our work and services. In addition to our ongoing range of work, we have listened to the needs of concerned advocates, and with the support of medical provider experts in our network, developed the following two new services:

- **Expert Medical Country Conditions Declarations**
  Harnessing the MPN’s first-person experience providing medical care abroad, we are now offering country conditions declarations to help individuals seeking asylum. These declarations highlight the barriers individuals would face if forced to return to a country that lacked the medical infrastructure necessary for them to access adequate medical care.

- **Alternatives To Detention Initiative**
  The MPN now offers medical advocacy letters to advocate for the removal of electronic ankle shackles/monitors, or enrollment in the SmartLINK surveillance mobile application at the direction of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). These letters are applicable to people placed in alternative to detention (ATD) programs and aimed to stop and prevent the exacerbation of potential mental health and or physical harm caused by these systems.
Brief Recap: 2021 Network Referral Case Data

Over 90 Case Referrals Received by the Network

- **49** General Immigration Referrals
- **23** COVID Immigration Referrals
- **25** Criminal Justice Referrals

**Supported the Release of 10 Individuals**

Assisted in the release of 8 immigrants from ICE custody from Bergen County Jail (NJ), Orange County Jail (NY), Buffalo Processing Center (NY), Hudson County Jail (NJ), and Essex County Jail (NJ)

Advocated for the release of 2 seriously ill individuals held at New York City’s Rikers Island Jail

MPN Case Patterns

Those released from both criminal and immigration settings were

- at an increased risk for COVID-19 complications due to age and/or pre-existing chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, history of stroke, obesity and asthma.
- The medical records reviewed demonstrated an alarming amount of undiagnosed and untreated mental health and mood disorders, including depression and anxiety.
- People in detention are experiencing unnecessary delays in receiving medical treatment, follow-up medical evaluations and screenings, and had their requests or sick calls ignored.
Overview of Cases Referred in 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases Referred to the Network</th>
<th>25+</th>
<th>1 COVID Immigration Referral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Immigration Referrals</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6 Country Conditions Declaration Referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice Referrals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 Alternatives to Detention Affidavit Referral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Medical Conditions Frequently Identified in MPN matters

- Neglected cardiovascular diseases, including hypertension and high cholesterol
- Uncontrolled Diabetes Mellitus
- Poor management of weight control resulting in obesity
- Untreated mental health disorders and mood disorders, including Schizoaffective Disorder, depression, and anxiety
- Undiagnosed and untreated substance use disorders
- Evidence of improper treatment for bodily pain, including pain in the upper extremities and chest pain, that could be indicative of more dangerous undiagnosed conditions
- Worsening eyesight and blindness overlooked by jail officials

Note-Worthy Case Trends

- Over 50% of General Immigration Referrals sent to the Network requested a medical summary letter which fully assessed and explained the client’s medical condition and their risks while in ICE custody. These letters identified the gaps in medical care and treatment these individuals received while in detention. Forty percent of these cases were requests for either a forensic or psychological evaluation. These were mostly used to support asylum applications and to document the physical and psychological consequences of the harms people experienced in their countries of origin.
- Declarations regarding the conditions in Mexico and the Dominican Republic were most frequently requested.
- Most people referred to the MPN are adults, Hispanic, and male. Only 24% of people referred to the MPN identified as adult females.

Additional Service-Related Accomplishments This Year

- The MPN has been able to support and/or is continuing to support 76% of all case referrals sent to us this year.
- Supported the release of one individual from ICE custody
- Over 950 medical pages reviewed by medical volunteers
In June 2022, a local law school clinic reached out to the MPN to seek medical advocacy support for their client, Mr. John Doe, who has been detained by ICE since last summer at the Buffalo Processing Center, located in Batavia, New York. Also known as Batavia Jail, this facility has been known for its unacceptable conditions and unsafe release practices. According to local advocates, the jail has a long history of violating basic human rights. Reports around the treatment of immigrants detained in the jail show harmful and deadly medical neglect in the form of delaying and denying life-saving medical care and treatment, and physical and emotional abuse by the jail’s guards.

In an effort to understand the gravity of Mr. John Doe’s medical conditions and risks while in ICE custody, the MPN connected Dr. Katharine Lamperti and medical student Raju Shilpa to his case. The medical duo reviewed hundreds of pages of medical records provided by Mr. Doe’s attorney, and wrote an advocacy letter summarizing his medical conditions.

Based on their review of the available medical records, the medical team identified serious gaps in the medical care that Mr. John Doe received while detained in Batavia Jail. He suffers from a myriad of concerning chronic health conditions, including hypertension, type 2 diabetes mellitus, hypercholesterolemia, chronic kidney disease, external hemorrhoids, and obesity.

The medical team also found that Mr. John Doe contracted COVID-19 while in detention last winter. Fortunately, he recovered from the infection; however, his continued detention places him at risk for reinfection. Dr. Lamperti also insisted that Mr. John Doe’s medical conditions and age place him at higher risk of severe complications from a COVID-19 infection.

The medical advocacy from the medical team, and others alike, continues to be a powerful tool in securing improved medical care and treatment, as well as petitioning for the release of medically vulnerable individuals like Mr. John Doe, from inhumane detention settings like the Batavia Jail.
Orange County Correctional Facility (“OCCF”) has failed to protect the health of detained immigrants and prevent the spread of COVID-19 through the population. According to reports from January 2022, at least 50 of those detained in one unit were reportedly symptomatic. To make matters worse, “jail officials have repeatedly failed to provide access to vaccination and take appropriate quarantine measures to prevent the spread of the virus.” These reports are consistent with a nationwide crisis that is happening in immigrant detention centers across the country.

The Network has received at least 15 referrals from legal providers regarding individuals detained at the Orange County Correctional Facility. Network volunteers reviewed those individuals’ medical records and medical history to provide medical advocacy letters on their behalf, which were then used to support various avenues for legal relief.

Through the Network’s medical advocacy, we have been able to identify patterns of inadequate medical care at Orange County Jail. These concerns are heightened by the rampant spread of COVID in the facility in addition to its already overcrowded, unhygienic (lack access to soap, water and or hand sanitizer) and inhumane conditions.

Many individuals held in OCJ have been in the age-risk group and/or have a variety of serious preexisting health conditions, including diabetes, obesity, and hypertension, which have the potential to cause fatal harm if not adequately and timely addressed by medical professionals. Many of the aforementioned individuals met the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)’s high risk criteria for complications from COVID-19 and are at a heightened risk for severe side-effects and death.

In addition to these patterns we have identified other types of concerning trends at Orange County, including:

- the intake assessment process is incomplete and inadequate;
- there are language access barriers, including improper medical translation and lack of interpretation services;
- there are outstanding gaps in medical care provided by the jail’s clinic;
- the jail has failed to manage the chronic conditions of individuals in detention, including hypertension and diabetes;
- there is evidence that the jail has discontinued essential care and treatment for individuals with pre-existing health conditions; and
- the jail has failed to manage or even diagnose mental health conditions of individuals.

Ultimately, these trends show ICE’s outright disregard for the care, safety and basic human rights of individuals held in OCJ and other immigration detention facilities nationwide.
In February 2022, over fifty detained people put their bodies on the line and staged a hunger strike to demand healthy meals, the dismissal of racist guards, and demanded their immediate release from Orange County Jail. In response to persistent abuses and to amplify detained people’s demands, Steering Committee Member Dr. Kate Sugarman and the NYLPI team joined an emergency legislative briefing to share critical information with state and city legislators about the health crisis at OCCF and advocated for people to be released. MedPage also featured an op-ed detailing the human rights violations and abhorrent health conditions of ICE detention units, co-authored by Dr. Kate Sugarman as well as Fulbright Scholar Eileen Martinez and Juliana E. Morris, MD, EdM, an instructor at Harvard Medical School and a member of the Physicians for Human Rights' Asylum Network.

Also in February of 2022, with the expert support of Dr. Kate Sugarman, the NYLPI team joined five immigrant rights organizations, including Catholic Charities Community Services – Archdiocese of New York, Envision Freedom Fund, For the Many, Freedom for Immigrants, and NYU Law Immigrant Rights Clinic to submit a complaint to the Department for Homeland Security (DHS) Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) seeking redress for ongoing civil rights violations against people detained at OCCF and to call on DHS to remove officers named in the complaint, as well as to immediately release all detained immigrants and terminate its contract with OCCF. In April of 2022, the complaint was supplemented with additional information.

"Immigration facilities' lack of adequate medical and mental healthcare has resulted in serious harm to people in detention," explained Dr. Kate Sugarman, board certified family medicine physician and Steering Committee member of New York Lawyers for the Public Interest’s volunteer Medical Providers Network. “The resulting hunger strikes reflect the sheer desperation for relief and improved conditions. ICE needs to follow the directives of many public health experts and release everyone from its custody.”

- OCCF Supplemental Complaint Press Release Quote

As more people detained by ICE at NY’s Orange County Correctional Facility began calling for an end to the facility’s racist abuses, retaliation and intolerable conditions, advocates and directly impacted individuals joined together to demand that local elected officials and the Biden Administration move to shut down detention centers nationwide, including Orange County jail.

In late February 2022, NYLPI alongside MPN members, including Steering Committee member Dr. Chanelle Diaz, urged the City Council to support the NY Dignity Not Detention Act (S.7373/A.7099A) through a resolution calling on the NY State legislature and the Governor to pass this Act and reduce the physical and emotional harm caused by detention. Just a week later, we were pleased to learn that the New York City Council passed the resolution (#Reso0066). This was the first step in ensuring immigrants in New York are treated with #DignityNotDetention.
According to our coalition partners in the Dignity Not Detention Coalition, on Sunday, July 25th, 2022, an individual detained by ICE in Orange County Jail reported that all individuals held in the immigration units were tested for COVID-19 and being given 20 minutes to call their families and attorneys as they were told by jail officials that they would be transferred “very soon”. By the following morning, ICE officials secretly transferred approximately 40% of people detained in this facility, without providing any advanced notice or information regarding the location to which they were transferring individuals. This effectively robbed them the opportunity to petition for their release. Some people have reported to have been sent to Elizabeth Detention Facility in New Jersey, and then to other facilities such as the Buffalo Federal Facility in Batavia, New York and the Adams County Correctional Center in Mississippi.

The Dignity Not Detention working group and its umbrella coalition, the Abolish ICE NY-NJ Coalition, of which NYLPI is an active member, has been organizing for months to call for the closing of Orange County Jail and demanded that people be released, not transferred.

ICE has the power to release people and not transfer them. We firmly believe that all immigrant New Yorkers have the right to live in the safety of their homes and communities with the support of their loved ones while they navigate their immigration proceedings and receive the medical care and treatment they need.
The Network’s Steering Committee is Growing!

On behalf of the current network’s Steering Committee members, including Dr. Ross, Dr. Diaz, Dr. Alfaro, Dr. Kratz and Danielle, it is with pleasure we introduce our newest advocates who have agreed to take part in this very important work!

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Kate Sugarman, Marlene Nava Ramos, Ismery Lora and Alyssa Sinko, to the MPN Steering Committee.

Dr. Sugarman has been and continues to be an integral member of the Network since joining us in early 2020. Dr. Sugarman is also an active leader in Doctor for Camp Closure and an advocate in local and national movement work. With her support in outreach and awareness building, our network’s membership has expanded in the past year. Dr. Sugarman is a family medicine physician, working in community health clinics since 1991 and has completed over 500 forensic evaluations.

Marlene has been an active organizer, advocate and leader in the campaign to end ICE and immigration enforcement in New York, New Jersey and across the nation. She has been connected to NYLPI and our medical advocacy work for more than 3 years now! Marlene is also an active member of the Abolish ICE NY-NJ Coalition and is leading various efforts related to individual requests for release.

Ismery has been an incredible advocate for clients in immigration detention through her work at the Bronx Defenders. Ismery has worked as a social worker and immigrant rights advocate for many years now! She has also collaborated with NYLPI on various educational panel events and individual MPN referrals in the past.

Alyssa- an amazing and active member of the Network, is joining us as our newest Medical Student-Resident Member of the committee! She recently completed her medical studies at the Sidney Kimmel Medical College and has matched into her residency program and will be working with fellow student advocates in increasing the Network’s engagement with medical students and residents alike.
NYLPI works to improve access to healthcare in immigration detention facilities. Despite the dire health risks posed by the spread of COVID-19, Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials continue to arrest and confine people to immigration detention facilities and jails. For NYC residents held in detention, NYLPI provides crucial individual and systemic advocacy to improve access to care and to advocate for release. We are excited to share information on active and past civil-rights cases:

**Sosa V. Hudson County**
Longtime New Yorker Geurys Sosa, originally from the Dominican Republic, has filed a lawsuit against Hudson County and those responsible for his medical care while he was confined to immigration detention at Hudson County Correctional Center. As a result of the facility’s delays and denials of medical care, Mr. Sosa endured needless pain and suffering during the seventeen months that he was held in custody by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

**Bonilla V. Hudson County**
The family of Carlos Bonilla, a father of four who died from internal bleeding in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention, has filed a lawsuit against Hudson County and those responsible for his medical care while he was confined to immigration detention at Hudson County Correctional Center.

New York Lawyers for the Public Interest and Dechert LLP filed a civil rights and tort lawsuit in federal court in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey arising out of Mr. Bonilla’s wrongful death.

**Charles V. Orange County**
Charles v. Orange County was a federal lawsuit that challenged the unconstitutional “discharge and dump” policies that impacted people with mental illness in immigration detention. In 2016, NYLPI filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, after county officials in Orange County, NY discharged two people with serious mental illnesses from immigration detention without mental health discharge planning. Discharge planning—a plan to ensure that medical care does not lapse upon release—is widely regarded as an essential component of medical care. In November 2019, NYLPI announced settlements of $900,000 and $825,000 respectively with Orange County and the United States – a positive resolution that we hope will serve as a deterrent against future mistreatment by local and federal government agencies.
NYLPI’s Health Justice team is excited to share the fourth installment of NYLPI’s Health Justice Talks: Safety & COVID-19 Vaccination for Children.

Dr. Steve Auerbach, MD, MPH, FAAP, Pediatrician and expert in public health, provides important information and answers questions about the current state of COVID-19 vaccination and safety for children. COVID-19 vaccines are safe and highly effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. As vaccination eligibility expands for children 6 months and older, it is critical that parents and guardians of children have access to reliable and updated information on vaccination and safety for their loved ones.

The MPN Joins The Call for Healthcare Access for All New Yorkers

This spring, the Network joined major hospitals, healthcare networks, independent clinics and advocates to urge for the expansion of health coverage to all New Yorkers regardless of their immigration status.

Make the Road NY sent a letter co-signed by NYLPI’s Medical Providers Network to Governor Kathy Hochul urging her to expand healthcare coverage to all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status. NYLPI is a steering committee member of the #Coverage4All Coalition.

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Interested in Joining the Network?

We are always looking for motivated, passionate and dedicated volunteers to join the Network. If you are interested in joining the Network, please email our Detention team at detention@nylpi.org.

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.