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GREATER ROCHESTER HEALTH FOUNDATION AWARDS \$292,105 TO EMBED ATTORNEYS INTO HEALTH CARE TREATMENT AT NO COST TO PATIENTS



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For Immediate Release

GREATER ROCHESTER HEALTH FOUNDATION AWARDS \$292,105 TO EMBED ATTORNEYS INTO HEALTH CARE TREATMENT AT NO COST TO PATIENTS

The project, Finger Lakes Legal Care, offers free legal services.

March 1, 2018, ROCHESTER, N.Y., - Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. (LawNY®) announced yesterday that it received a three-year grant of \$292,105 to expand its Finger Lakes Legal Care (FLLC) project at Rochester Regional Health. The project embeds lawyers and free legal services into health care using the medical-legal partnership model. The expansion will allow LawNY® to conduct research on the model's local health impacts while providing direct legal services to patients and families.

The model is relatively new to Rochester but is well-established nationwide: 294 health organizations in 41 states have medical-legal partnerships. FLLC brought the model to Rochester Regional Health in 2012. FLLC Attorneys maintain on-site office hours one day a week at both Rochester General Hospital and Alexander Park. The attorneys address legal issues that affect health such as unfair housing practices, health insurance coverage issues, and public benefits denials, among others.

Donald Schimizzi, who received FLLC legal services following his cancer diagnosis said, "Do I think I am healthier for having access to free lawyers at RGH? It is a 'no brainer' for me. Rochester needs a medical-legal partnership to help souls like me not fall through the cracks."

The project also provides financial benefit to health systems. Gayle Elledge, Rochester Regional Health's Office of Sponsored Programs/Research explained,

“Finger Lakes Legal Care has recovered over \$980,000 since the project started in 2012 for Rochester Regional Health by getting insurers to cover medical expenses, and the project costs a small fraction of what it recovers.”

About LawNY®: FLLC is a project of LawNY®. LawNY® is a 501(c)(3) law firm established to provide access to the justice system for low-income people and other vulnerable populations who have civil legal problems. The organization serves 14 counties, through 7 field offices strategically situated throughout the region in Jamestown, Geneva, Bath, Olean, Elmira, Ithaca and Rochester. The Rochester office of LawNY® (LawNY® Rochester), formerly known as Monroe County Legal Assistance Center, has served Monroe County since 1968, almost 50 years. More information is available at lawny.org.

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Last updated on March 02, 2018.

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