



Speaker Biographies

Sarah Halsell has served as the State Legal Services Developer at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs since 2005. A position required of each state in the federal Older Americans Act, the Legal Services Developer provides leadership in securing and maintaining the legal rights of older individuals and plays a key role in assisting states in the development and the provision of a strong elder rights system. Sarah has worked with many key stakeholders in both law and aging to strengthen the capacity of Florida's legal services delivery system to serve the most critical legal needs of vulnerable older Floridians. Prior to her work at Elder Affairs, Sarah worked as the Policy Coordinator for the Florida Medicaid Program where she developed an appreciation for the complex needs of the elderly and a desire to work in aging. A native Floridian, Sarah earned her Juris Doctor from Florida State University and is a licensed member of the Florida Bar.

Miriam Harmatz, Executive Director of the Florida Health Justice Project, is a former senior health law attorney at Florida Legal Services and adjunct professor in the Health Law Clinic at Florida International University College of Law. Prior to FLS, she worked as a legal aid staff attorney in Micronesia, Kentucky and Miami. Miriam's work focuses on expanding access to health care for vulnerable populations, and she has been lead counsel or co-counsel on multiple federal court cases resulting in statewide systemic relief for Medicaid beneficiaries. These successful outcomes are the result of highly collaborative work with national experts, pro bono attorneys and Florida legal aid lawyers eager to engage in impact advocacy. In addition to litigation, she has provided trainings and presentations and publications on health care programs and issues. She received a B.A. and Phi Beta Kappa from Stanford University and a J.D. from the University of Wisconsin. She currently serves on the Board of the National Health Law Program.

Katy DeBriere is Legal Director of the Florida Health Justice Project. She has experience both in identifying and addressing systemic issues through impact litigation and in representing a large number of individual clients with Medicaid eligibility and service issues. She recently served as lead counsel in *Harrell et al v. Poppell*, a successful Medicaid class action that helps ensure ongoing coverage for Medicaid beneficiaries. Katy began her legal career in 2008 as an Equal Justice Works fellow. Her two-year fellowship generated several state court of appeals successes, two 42 U.S.C. 1983 suits, and culminated in a successful facial constitutional challenge to a state statutory scheme for the commitment of person with developmental disabilities. Within a year of being hired to direct the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership, Katy secured significant funding for the partnership – the first-time external funding has been obtained in the project's 12-year history. Katy has taken a lead role in developing statewide medical legal partnership (MLP) network and has



provided multiple trainings to advocates and providers on public benefits programs available to low income Floridians, including the Medicaid program. She received her J.D. from the University of Florida.

Michael Phillips is the North Regional Ombudsman manager for the Florida Long Term Care ombudsman program. This region serves the counties of Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton. He has been with the program for many years. He attended the University of West Florida and Mississippi College of Law.

Toby S. Edelman has been representing older people in long-term care facilities since 1977. As a Senior Policy Attorney with the Center for Medicare Advocacy since January 2000, Ms. Edelman provides training, research, policy analysis, consultation, and litigation support relating to nursing homes and other long-term care facilities. Under two grants from the Commonwealth Fund, she evaluated the federal nursing home survey and enforcement system and its impact on state activities and provided technical assistance to states on effective enforcement practices. In cooperation with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, she recently completed a Commonwealth Fund project to evaluate seven states' deficiency citations for misuse of antipsychotic drugs. Since September 1999, she has written a monthly newsletter on nursing home enforcement issues. Ms. Edelman was the lead attorney for a statewide class of nursing facility residents who successfully challenged the state of California's refusal to implement the federal Nursing Home Reform Law). As a beneficiary representative, Ms. Edelman has testified before Congress and served on federal task forces, technical expert panels, and working groups on nursing home issues. Ms. Edelman received a B.A., Magna cum Laude, from Barnard College (1968), an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education (1969), and a J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center (1974). Ms. Edelman is a member of the Washington, DC Bar.