

National Health Law Program's Managing Attorney honored for improving access to health care for non-English speakers

Washington D.C.—NHeLP Managing Attorney Mara Youdelman has been named a 2011 Language Access Champion by the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC). The award honors a person, program, or organization whose work has contributed to improving the lives of all people through the promotion of language access in health care.

“We are delighted by this news,” said NHeLP Executive Director Emily Spitzer. “Mara’s expertise in language access issues has made a tremendous difference in the lives of patients who struggle to receive care because of language barriers. Her work has been essential to NHeLP’s efforts to overcome the challenges that restrict individuals from receiving quality healthcare.”

Mara is Managing Attorney in NHeLP's Washington D.C. office. In addition to language access, her work covers issues such as Medicaid, racial and ethnic disparities, and immigrants' issues. Mara also chairs the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI). In addition, Mara is currently Director of the National Language Access Advocacy Project, which works to increase awareness of language access issues at the federal level.

The National Council on Interpreting in Health Care is a multidisciplinary organization whose mission is to promote and enhance language access in health care in the United States. Nominated by members of NCIHC, the Language Access Champions are members of the healthcare community who have made significant contributions to the field of healthcare interpreting.

In announcing the award, NCIHC President Joy Connell said, "During Mara's tenure at NHeLP, there have been innumerable lives improved as a result of her work. Not only is she a leading expert on cultural and linguistic issues, she has been generous in sharing her expertise with others. She is a true advocate and her passion carries over into her work. We are delighted to honor her with this year's Language Access Champion award."

Mara will receive the award at the 5th Annual Membership Meeting of NCIHC in New Orleans on May 19.

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Founded in 1969, the National Health Law Program works with and on behalf of limited-income people, people with disabilities, and children to improve their access to quality health care and to enforce their legal rights to health. NHeLP works with courts, government agencies, and Congress to ensure quality health care for the most vulnerable members of our society.

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