

# CBA NEWS

## Medical Malpractice, Probate and Wrongful Death Cases Referred Through LRS

By Ann Glynn, CBA Public Affairs Director

**T**he Lawyer Referral Service, a non-profit public service of the Chicago Bar Association, remains a valuable resource for the public to obtain experienced and vetted legal assistance as well as a crucial source of legal referrals for CBA members and non-members.

In operation since 1940, LRS attorneys provide counsel in areas that include consumer protection, personal injury, domestic relations, estate planning, real estate, and employment law, among other areas of practice.

Three recent cases have resulted from calls to the LRS. In the first, LRS Chair Regina Etherton settled a medical malpractice case in November 2021 for \$1,165,000. The plaintiff, a 53-year-old female, suffered a fractured right ankle after being involved in a motor vehicle accident for which she was not at fault. She sought treatment, and the defendants wrongly diagnosed her condition as an ankle sprain. They negligently treated her

for a year by allowing her to bear weight on it and to undergo physical therapy. Afterwards, the plaintiff was referred to a physician outside of defendants' practice who confirmed that her ankle injury had been misdiagnosed.

The lawyers who settled her motor vehicle case did not accept professional responsibility for her medical malpractice case. The plaintiff, a paralegal at a Chicago law firm, did not know any medical malpractice lawyers and her statute of limitations was running out.

"The plaintiff needed an attorney who had the resources and experience to fight the defendants and the large organizations for whom they were employed," said Etherton. "So, she called the LRS because she knew that the lawyers on the panels were vetted and experienced."

Her case was settled after the plaintiff was deposed and before any additional depositions occurred or expert witnesses were disclosed. The CBA received a check

for \$58,000 for the referral, pursuant to its rules. The funds are being used to fund its LRS program and other services provided by the CBA in its ongoing effort to make justice accessible for all.

In the second and third cases, a wrongful death case prosecuted by David Gilbreth was settled in November 2021, and a probate case prosecuted by Carolyn Coukos settled in January 2022.

"The LRS has more than 200 lawyers available who are experienced in more than 40 areas of law and speak several different languages," said LRS Director Juli Vyverberg. "But we are always looking to recruit more lawyers with different expertise to our ranks. It's a wonderful opportunity for attorneys to build their client base."

The LRS screens the initial public inquiry and matches the person with an attorney in the specific legal area in which they seek guidance. On average, the LRS receives about 2,100 inquiries per month, resulting in 100 to 150 actual retained cases.

On the third Saturday of every month, the CBA sponsors the "Call a Lawyer" program through the Lawyer Referral Service, making attorneys available to take calls from the public at no charge. CBA members and non-members are encouraged to refer clients to the Lawyer Referral Service or consider joining the service to obtain legal referrals.

For more information on the LRS program visit [lrs.chicagobar.org](http://lrs.chicagobar.org) or reach out to LRS Director Juli Vyverberg at [jvyverberg@chicagobar.org](mailto:jvyverberg@chicagobar.org). ■



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