



Volunteer Attorney Accomplishment for Internal and External News

Date: March 29, 2016
Name of Attorneys: Jeffrey J. Murphy and Brian Lee
Name of Firm: Dentons US LLP
Client Served: Community Health Action of Staten Island (CHASI)

Accomplishment: Helped CHASI transfer ownership of the Staten Island LGBT Community Center to the Pride Center of Staten Island and negotiated a strategic alliance between CHASI and HELP/PSI (now Brightpoint Health), allowing CHASI to better provide much-needed health and support services to at-risk Staten Island communities.

Specific Case Highlights: Founded in 1988 as an AIDS service provider, Community Health Action of Staten Island now provides health-related education, prevention, and direct services for people most vulnerable and affected by health disparities – the poor, persons with criminal justice and intimate partner violence involvement, substance users, people of color, and the LGBT community. Annually, 12,000 Staten Islanders benefit from CHASI's programs, including medical case management for low income people with chronic illnesses (e.g. HIV, diabetes, heart disease and mental illness); harm reduction and addiction treatment; food and benefits assistance for poor and working individuals; and HIV, HCV, diabetes, and hypertension screening and linkage to care.

Started as a program of CHASI, the LGBT Center provides lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and their families with direct access to local services and activities promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being. From the Center's inception, CHASI intended to spin it off into an independent organization, a plan that commenced in 2008 when the Center moved to a separate site. In 2013, local community activists founded the Pride Center of Staten Island as a separate not-for-profit corporation and applied for tax exempt status. In early 2014, the spin off process was poised to begin in earnest.

Jeffrey J. Murphy of Dentons US LLP volunteered to assist CHASI in drafting a transfer of assets agreement. The process, and agreement, proved to be complicated, as it needed to address not only the Center's programming, but government contracts, fundraising, employees, office and program space, and the new Board's responsibilities. The final agreement maps out a two-year stepped process that will allow the Center's Board and management to grow into the administration of the independent organization. The agreement was approved by CHASI's Board in February 2016 and by the Center's Board in March 2016.

In 2014, in the midst of the spin off process, CHASI had the opportunity to enter into a strategic alliance with HELP/PSI (now Brightpoint Health), a nonprofit provider of integrated health care and social support services operating in every New York City borough except Staten Island. Such an arrangement would enable CHASI to seek reimbursement for some of its services at a higher rate because of Brightpoint Health's status as a federally qualified health center (FQHC) and allow Brightpoint to gain a presence on Staten Island.

Mr. Murphy and his Dentons colleague **Brian Lee** volunteered to draft an affiliation agreement for CHASI. The agreement makes CHASI a subsidiary of Brightpoint Health, but allows it to retain its name and Board, as well as control of its programs. The affiliation agreement was signed by both Boards in December 2014 and became effective on January 1, 2015, with a plan for a multi-year roll-out process.

Diane Arneth, CHASI's Executive Director, said, "Jeff showed incredible patience throughout the long spin off process. It involved the transfer of funds, real assets, and employees and was very complicated. Jeff was amazing, responsive, and made us feel like a 'real' client of Dentons. And he and Brian Lee were very helpful in drafting the affiliation agreement with Brightpoint Health. It was a smooth process that moved quickly."

Elizabeth Perez, Lawyers Alliance's Legal Director, added, "Jeff, Brian, and Dentons are a terrific example of the kind of commitment, diligence, and skill our volunteers are providing to nonprofits that make a critical difference in the lives of New Yorkers. We are grateful for their strong and continued support for CHASI."

About Lawyers Alliance: [Lawyers Alliance for New York](#) is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods.

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