

Counsel Who Care: How Attys Are Helping During A Crisis

By **Xiumei Dong**

Law360 (June 2, 2020, 4:16 PM EDT) -- As coronavirus cases have spread, law firms across the nation have been stepping up to help, from providing pro bono legal assistance to fundraisers and donations.

Law360 rounds up some of the latest charity efforts from the legal community in response to the pandemic.

Boston Trial Lawyers Raise Funds to Aid Health Care Workers

Clyde Bergstresser, a malpractice attorney at Boston-based boutique Bergstresser & Pollock PC, has launched a charity with the support of other attorneys in the community to raise money to support the frontline health care workers battling the coronavirus.

Joining Bergstresser in the effort are his colleague Russell Pollock, Choate Hall & Stewart LLP partner Joan Lukey, Prince Lobel Tye LLP partner Walter Prince, Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP partner Jonathan Albano, Smith Duggan Buell & Rufo LLP partner Christopher Duggan and former U.S. District Judge and current Harvard Law School lecturer Nancy Gertner.

According to the charity's website, some of the recipients of the funds include the Boston Medical Center, Boston EMS, the city's ambulance service and health care providers in Worcester.

Bergstresser & Pollock has donated more than \$25,000 to the fund, Choate Hall more than \$10,000, and Boston firms Ficksman & Conley LLP and Adler Cohen Harvey Wakeman & Guekguezian LLP as well as attorney Duggan have all donated more than \$2,500 each.

Epstein Becker Green Launches Meal Donation Drive

Epstein Becker Green has created a campaign, called "Most Valuable Providers (MVPs) – Serving Those Who Serve Us," to raise money for the purchase of meals from local restaurants, which will then be provided to health care workers in New York City.

"Because of Epstein Becker Green's focus on health care and labor and employment, we understand firsthand the ways that health care providers and restaurant owners have been affected by the coronavirus pandemic, as well as the residual impact on the U.S. labor market more broadly," Ian Carleton Schaefer, a member of the firm's employment, labor and workforce management practice, said

in a statement.

With the help of its professional staff, Epstein Becker Green has created a GoFundMe page to allow the firm's employees, clients and the public to donate.

The firm's goal is to raise \$100,000 and then use the fund to buy at least 5,000 meals from local restaurants to support frontline health care workers. To date, the firm has raised over \$42,000 from more than 200 donors.

Kirkland Extends Effort to Help Feed Families in Honduras

Kirkland & Ellis LLP information governance analyst Ramiro Ocasio and firm partner Jon Henes created the Foundation for Education in Honduras in 2014 to build and refurbish schools in high-need areas of Honduras.

As those communities now face COVID-19, the organization is launching a program called Feeding FEIH to help feed about 1,600 Honduran families facing layoffs and lack of food due to the pandemic.

More than 2,000 Honduran students are currently attending schools founded by the organization, which so far total 12 with another on the way, the firm said. In addition to raising money, the foundation is also working to provide food, biosecurity gear such as thermometers, and transportation for the volunteers in Honduras that are packaging and delivering the food.

Sheppard Mullin, Shipman & Goodwin Provide Face Shields to Frontline Workers

Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP has joined with other organizations to launch the Face Shield Project, with a goal of producing and distributing up to 30,000 face shields to frontline health care workers, emergency first responders and homeless services providers in the Los Angeles area.

The firm's partners on that project include the Rotary Club of Los Angeles Foundation, SoCal Litigation Support Services, and a local group of volunteer health care, technology and social impact professionals.

As of late May, the team had printed, assembled and distributed 3,700 face shields, according to Rick Gibson, President of the Rotary Club of Los Angeles and Vice President of Pepperdine University.

As part of a different project, Joan Feldman, chair of Shipman & Goodwin LLP's health law practice group, is providing pro bono assistance to one of her firm's longtime clients, Whelen Engineering Co. Inc., to help the automotive and aviation products manufacturer pivot a portion of its plant to personal protective equipment.

The company has produced more than 16,000 full-face protective shields and face masks for health care providers. Feldman has handled all legal work, including contracts and approvals, that the company needed to create and distribute masks, the firm said.

Hogan Lovells, Morgan Lewis Assist Crime Victims During Pandemic

Attorneys at Hogan Lovells have partnered with the Network for Victim Recovery of DC to help protect the rights of those in the District who have experienced crimes such as domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking.

Hogan Lovells, representing the nonprofit organization, has asked the D.C. Superior Court to amend its Criminal Standing Order of March 22, 2020, which establishes procedures for defendants requesting early release from prison during the pandemic. As a result, the court added language to its guidelines that give victims the opportunity to voice their opinion if someone in prison for abusing or stalking them requests early release, and allows victims to actively prepare themselves should a request be granted, the firm said in a press release.

Meanwhile, Morgan Lewis said its attorneys are participating in a remote program hosted by Ascend Justice to help provide free legal assistance to survivors of domestic violence and families affected by the child welfare system.

The Order of Protection remote program, which was announced April 16, connects volunteer attorneys to petitioners who are unable to be physically present at Chicago's Domestic Violence Courthouse.

Petitioners can call in during select hours Monday through Friday, and a volunteer attorney will work with them to prepare their petition for an order of protection, the firm said.

Similarly, a number of the firm's lawyers in D.C. are assisting the DC Volunteer Lawyers Project with remote clinics for low-income individuals on how to obtain restraining orders. Meanwhile, in the U.K., Morgan Lewis lawyers are working with the National Centre for Domestic Violence to help prepare application documents for victims seeking emergency nonmolestation orders in family court.

--Editing by Alanna Weissman.