

## **Mental Health and Medical Care For Your Clients**

### Mental Health Care

A substantial percentage of NIJC clients have been found to be suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or other psychiatric disturbances as a result of what they have witnessed or suffered in their home country or in the United States. Some of NIJC's clients will already be receiving mental health services at the time you accept their case, while others will not yet have received any services.

NIJC strongly recommends that if you observe behavior in your clients that suggests the presence of emotional disturbances, alert NIJC staff so that the client can be referred for evaluation and treatment if necessary. In addition, if your client is suffering from PTSD or other psychological problems that may affect her testimony or ability to assist in the preparation of her case, you should consider having a psychologist submit an affidavit describing the client's symptoms in detail. In some types of *pro bono* cases, an affidavit from a psychologist, therapist, or counselor is a necessary part of the application package to establish the harm that the client suffered.

### Medical Care

Non-citizens who reside in Illinois and have a pending asylum application are eligible for Illinois Medicaid. See the "Asylum Applicant Medical Coverage Information" document for more information.

If your client has been beaten or tortured, it may also be helpful to have a medical doctor evaluate your client. The doctor can then provide a forensic medical evaluation to establish that the physical evidence of the harm your client suffered is consistent with your client's description of the events.

### Service Providers

NIJC is associated with the Marjorie Kovler Center, which provides support services to survivors of torture. Many NIJC clients are Kovler Center clients as well. If your client is eligible for Kovler services<sup>1</sup>, you are encouraged to work with Kovler Center volunteers and staff, where confidentiality permits, to obtain mental health and/or forensic medical evaluations for your client. If you believe your client would benefit from the services of the Kovler Center, contact Asylum and *Pro Bono* Project Coordinator Carolina Ramazzina Van Moorsel at [cramazzinavanmoorsel@heartlandalliance.org](mailto:cramazzinavanmoorsel@heartlandalliance.org) for information and a referral to Kovler, where appropriate.

Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), a non-profit organization headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, may be able to refer your client to a mental health or medical professional who can perform a mental health evaluation or forensic medical evaluation for your client. PHR cannot provide on-going services for your client. To request a referral, go to <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/asylum/>.

For counseling services specific to victims of domestic violence, please contact NIJC.

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<sup>1</sup> The Kovler Center only accepts cases involving harm inflicted by the government or by entities acting with the acquiescence of the government.

**Asylum Applicant Medical Coverage Information**

Any Illinois resident with a pending asylum application can apply for Medicaid through the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) provided they meet the following requirements:

- Pending asylum application
- Residence in Illinois
- Age 19 or older<sup>2</sup>
- Ineligible for other medical coverage
- Income eligible (contact IDHS with questions regarding income standards)

Applications for Illinois Medicaid can be downloaded at <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=33698>

An application **for each individual** should be filled out with the following documents attached:

1. Proof of pending asylum application: the person must provide a Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative (form G-28, EOIR-28 or EOIR-27), and any **one** of the following six documents (a through f):
  - (a) I-589 asylum application Acknowledgment of Receipt issued by USCIS, or
  - (b) I-589 Asylum Interview Notice issued by USCIS, or
  - (c) Referral Notice regarding I-589 request for asylum to a an immigration judge issued by UCIS, or
  - (d) Form I-589 Application for Asylum stamped as received by the Court, or
  - (e) Form EOIR-26 Notice of Appeal with Filing Receipt for Appeal issued by the Board of Immigration Appeals, or
  - (f) Petition for Review stamped by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.
2. Proof of Illinois residency
  - (a) Rent receipt or lease with the address or
  - (b) a letter from NIJC or *pro bono* attorney stating the individual's address

**Please note that asylum applicants are NOT eligible for cash assistance or food stamps and can cross out pages 4, 8, and 9 of the Medicaid application.**

The application and documents for **Cook County residents** should be mailed to:

Illinois Department of Human Services c/o Special Units  
2112 W. Lawrence  
Chicago, IL 60625

It can also be faxed to the attention of Special Units at 773-907-4238. The phone number for the Special Units office of IDHS is 773-907-4160.

**For non-Cook County residents**, the application goes to the local IDHS Family Services Resource Center Determinations will be made quickly. If the applicant is found eligible, she can receive Medicaid. Their eligibility will be redetermined after one year. There is a maximum eligibility of two years, unless they have a pending appeal at that time.

*Please note: this document was compiled by the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) based on information available to the public through the Illinois Department of Human Service's website.*

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<sup>2</sup> Any child 18 years old or younger residing in Illinois is eligible for All Kids state medical coverage regardless of immigration status