

Faulk, Camilla

From: Amy Woodfin [amycwoodfin@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 27, 2009 10:07 PM
To: Faulk, Camilla
Subject: Support for APR 28 - Limited Practice Rule for Legal Technicians

I am writing in support of APR 28, which proposes to authorize trained and qualified non-lawyers (Legal Technicians) to provide legal assistance to the public within specific and clearly defined parameters.

As I have read the comments posted on the Washington Courts web site about the proposed rule, I am struck by the similarity between the legal profession and the medical profession as they respectively reached the point when the way it has always been done can no longer meet the demands for service and the best interests of those they serve. The beginnings of the mid-level medical professions, e.g. Paramedic, Physician Assistant, Pathology Assistant, and Advanced Nursing, since the 1960's have been met with similar concerns, protestations, denials of efficacy and predictions of catastrophe to the profession and to patients. Time has clearly proven the benefits mid-level practitioners bring to the medical profession and to patients. Given the requirements, scope of practice, conditions and limitations for providing services, and the clear definition of prohibited acts defined in the Legal Technician rule, I see little difference in the benefits that will be achieved by adopting APR 28 and what the medical profession now enjoys.

I have worked in the medical field for over 20 years, part of that time as a Paramedic and Community Emergency Response educator. One of the guiding principles in emergency response is, "the greatest good for the greatest number". The 2003 Civil Legal Needs Study clearly shows that a large number, approximately 17%, of the people in our state are not getting the legal help they need. That is most definitely an emergency which costs not only the victims (low-income and vulnerable persons), but our communities as a whole as we deal with the aftermath of the unmet need for legal services. If, as I read in many of the comments already submitted, there are so many lawyers that are available because they cannot find work, why is there still such a need among the underserved? The Legal Technician rule is a well thought out, realistic response to a critical need. Not to approve it is to do what has always been done, and that no longer works.

I now work in the Legal Department of a not for profit primary healthcare organization and am pursuing certification as a Paralegal. With a keen interest in the legal profession, and personal experience as a paramedical professional, I can clearly see Legal Technicians being of tremendous value in meeting the needs of clients that would otherwise fall through the cracks. Knowing the criteria and burden of responsibility for becoming a Legal Technician, I gladly accept the challenge.

In closing, I urge the Washington State Supreme Court to adopt APR 28 so Legal Technicians can assist the entire legal profession in doing the greatest good for the greatest number.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Amy C. Woodfin
1297 Paradise Rd
Ferndale, WA 98247
(360) 220-6735
amycwoodfin@yahoo.com