



# NYSBA News Release

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## **STATE BAR ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES EMERGENCY TASK FORCE TO ASSIST SOLO PRACTITIONERS, SMALL LAW FIRMS, IMPACTED BY CORONAVIRUS**

The New York State Bar Association is establishing an emergency COVID-19 Task Force to Assist Solo Practitioners and Small Firms as they weather and prepare to recover from the severe economic crisis created by the coronavirus and its dramatic impact on the entire economy - including the practice of law.

“COVID-19 is having a devastating impact on solo and small firm practitioners, many of whom have limited financial resources to draw upon during the crisis,” said Hank Greenberg, president of the New York State Bar Association. “The task force will focus like a laser beam on these lawyers’ immediate needs, in addition to helping them meet the challenges the profession will face when the crisis subsides.”

The task force, chaired by two solo practitioners, Domenick Napoletano in Brooklyn and June Castellano in Rochester, will assess this swiftly-developing situation and make recommendations on an ongoing basis to get these attorneys much-needed help as quickly as possible.

“Small law firms are the backbone of our association and more than half of our members work as a solo practitioner or in a firm with fewer than 10 attorneys,” said Scott Karson, president-elect of NYSBA. “This task force will stand ready to aid these attorneys as circumstances dictate.”

In addition to the task force’s work, the association’s charitable arm, The New York Bar Foundation, is creating a special fund to aid legal service providers. These providers are responding to urgent new needs for legal representation such as those who are ill yet lack access to affordable health care, laid-off workers needing help with unemployment forms and domestic violence victims endangered by being forced to shelter in place with their abusers.

“We are gravely concerned about cash-strapped legal services organizations, who may be asked to reduce expenses or furlough staff, just at the moment when their services so urgently needed,” said Lesley Rosenthal, president of the foundation. “We are confident

that those in New York's legal community who are able will rally to help those less fortunate, as they have done so many times before.”

Almost one in four members of NYSBA are solo practitioners and another 29 percent work in small firms with fewer than ten attorneys.