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## CoLAP Transcript Appendix: Law School Lap Survey Results

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# COLAP TRANSCRIPT APPENDIX: LAW SCHOOL LAP SURVEY RESULTS

## INTRODUCTION\*

Over the last two decades, a number of books, articles, and published research papers have demonstrated a high incidence of depression and alcohol and drug abuse among law students.<sup>1</sup> Law students have even been shown to suffer in significantly greater numbers than medical students. The prevalence of alcohol and drug use has been shown to increase for each year of law school.<sup>2</sup> Trends such as these are concerning, since they undermine learning, morale, and the legal profession itself.

Lawyer Assistance Programs (LAP), which provide services to lawyers suffering from addictions and emotional health issues, have been extended to the law school setting in most states. The ABA Commission on Lawyer Assistance Programs (CoLAP) assembled the Law School Assistance Committee Best Practices Initiative in March 2011. Its goal is to act as a resource guide for facilitating better delivery of services from LAPs to law schools.

In 2012 the Law School Assistance Committee conducted a survey. All fifty states and Ontario were surveyed regarding their LAP assistance to law students. Specifically, state LAP directors responded to a set of questions that asked about the types of services provided to their law schools, the frequency with which these services are provided, who provides the services, and whether any approaches have been identified as particularly successful. The survey questions asked:

- When do you visit your law school(s)? This could be by time of year, by event (i.e., orientation, ethics classes), and/or upon

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1. See ABA COMM'N ON LAWYER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS LAW SCHOOL OUTREACH SUBCOMM., LITERATURE REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT (n.d.), available at <http://apps.americanbar.org/legalservices/colap/downloads/colapbooks.pdf>.

2. See Ass'n of Am. Law Schs. Comm. Report, *Report of the AALS Special Committee on the Problem of Substance Abuse in Law Schools*, 44 J. LEGAL EDUC. 35-80 (1994).

request only.

- What do you do once onsite? Presentations (if so, what is the topic, who presents, is it interactive, etc.); Tabling in the lobby or elsewhere; Office hours.
- Anything you do with law students that is not onsite at the law school (if applicable)? These might be sponsored wellness events, for example.
- Most important, we want to hear what has been effective, different, or creative. What seems to be resonating with the students with whom you meet?

Every jurisdiction surveyed provided responses. All jurisdictions indicated that some level of support is available in the law school setting (Alaska is an exception because it does not have any law schools).

## RESULTS

### *1. When do you visit your law school(s)?*

#### *Frequency of visits:*

Although those surveyed were not asked to quantify their visits to law schools, most responded with general estimates or language from which estimates could be extracted (for example, a response of “we present at orientation” was interpreted as a once a year visit).

- Most jurisdictions (78%, n=40) reported that their law schools receive approximately 1-3 visits from LAPs per year. Of these, respondents most commonly indicated that their law schools received approximately 2-3 visits per year (23 jurisdictions fell in this category). A total of 17 jurisdictions indicated their law schools received approximately one visit per year.
- A handful of jurisdictions provided more support to their law schools, with a few<sup>3</sup> suggesting more than three visits per year, and two jurisdictions<sup>4</sup> providing monthly, individual support to law students.
- Four jurisdictions<sup>5</sup> did not use quantifiable language in their responses. Two<sup>6</sup> indicated they do not visit their law schools.

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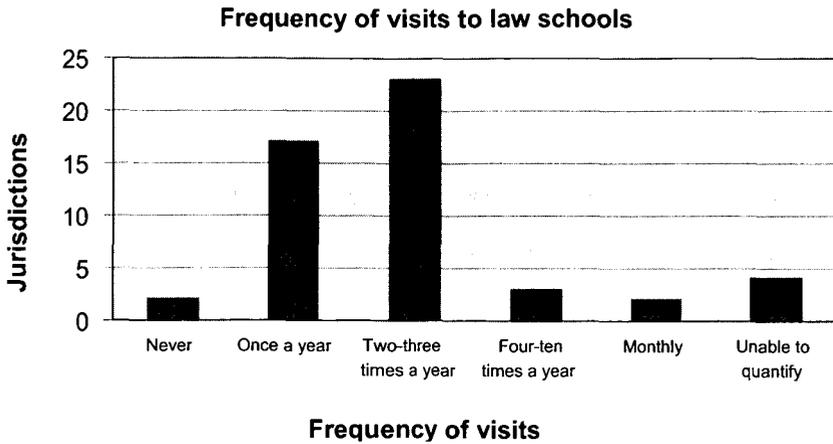
3. Nebraska, New Hampshire, and New Mexico

4. Alabama and South Carolina

5. Illinois, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Washington

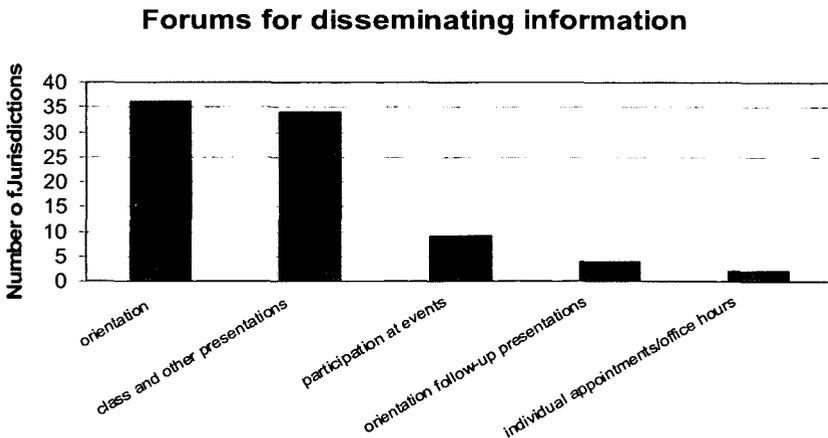
6. Georgia and West Virginia





*When visits take place*

Orientation was reported as being the most common point at which LAPs presented and provided information to law students (n=36). The second most commonly reported forum for disseminating information was class presentations (n=34). Other reported opportunities for visiting law schools and disseminating information include law school events, orientation follow-up presentations, and one-on-one appointments or office hours.



Although not specifically asked, many respondents indicated the classes at which they typically presented. Of the respondents who provided that information (n=30), the most common class for LAP presentations was the ethics/professional responsibility class. Other classes mentioned include

professionalism, torts, business of practicing law, legal writing groups, and a seminar on drug abuse.

Although not specifically asked, many respondents indicated the events and programs in which their LAPs participated. Events and programs mentioned include wellness day/week, student bar associations, student organizations, law council meetings, mentorship programs, ABA mental health day, and “lunch and learn” presentations.

Several respondents mentioned other forums that were unique to their jurisdiction. Such forums include: educational programs (Massachusetts), volunteer training (Maine), assessments and referrals for individual students, referral by Dean to individual students, volunteer program for peer assistance—LAP student representatives (New York), and LAP participation in summer practicum (Wisconsin).

There were noticeable themes in the responses to this part of the survey. First, a major focus for disseminating information tended to be on 1L students, with the majority of jurisdictions reporting orientation as the primary forum. Many jurisdictions then followed up with a subsequent presentation either during the students’ first year or in their professional responsibilities class. A handful of jurisdictions, however, discussed the demand for information specifically targeting 3L concerns about the character and fitness exam, suggesting there may be different needs at different points throughout the law school process. Florida was unique in its attention to this issue, as the respondent discussed a “three year cycle” where presenters provide information specific to each year (torts class during their first year, professional responsibility class during their second year, and a presentation during their third year).

A second theme also appeared. Although difficult to quantify, about half of the respondents used language that suggested they had taken the initiative in establishing regular presentations and opportunities for disseminating information. The rest used language that suggested a more passive approach, by indicating they would do presentations “upon request” of the law schools. This suggests there may be different law school-LAP relationships in different jurisdictions, and it is unclear from this survey which approach works better; this is a possible issue to explore in the future.

## *2. Content of presentations*

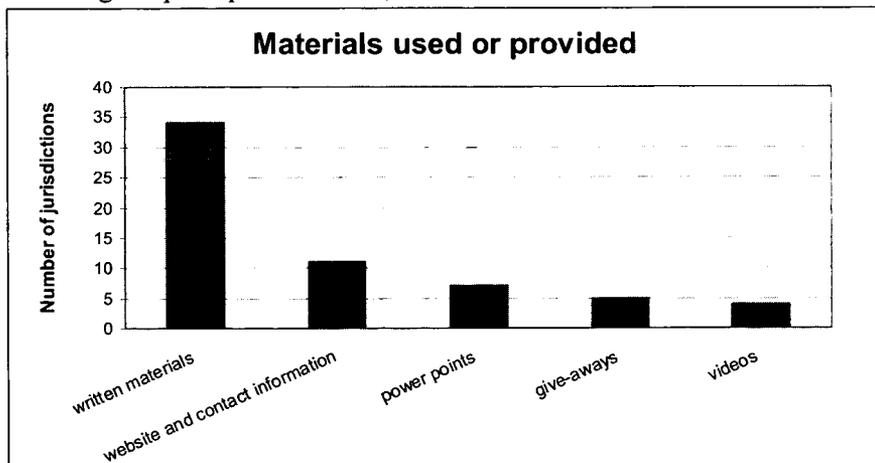
Many of the LAP directors provided specific information about the content of their presentations. The following types of information were cited:

- Informative presentations on a specific topic: stress, substance abuse, depression, alcoholism, addiction, etc.

- Recognizing potential stressors: signs and symptoms
- Preventative methods, such as stress management
- Common mental health and dependency issues law students face and how they can affect one's career
- Accessing LAP services; the role of LAP
- Ethical considerations such as confidentiality
- Statistics regarding these issues among the legal profession
- The character and fitness exam; other issues that arise with the bar application
- Mock interventions
- Personal stories of recovery

### 3. Materials used or provided

When asked about what specific materials LAPs used or provided to law students, the following were mentioned: written materials, website and other contact information, PowerPoints, "give-aways," and videos (see chart below). The most common response was "written materials," with 34 jurisdictions reporting this category of material provided. Specific types of materials mentioned include: books/booklets, brochures,<sup>7</sup> handouts, pamphlets, Larry Krieger's pamphlets specifically for law students, ABA study regarding law students, a tip sheet, a symptom checklist, ABA CoLAP stress materials, and self-generated materials. Several jurisdictions (n=5) mentioned "give-aways," which included bookmarks, stress balls, pens and pencils, and posters. Other specific materials mentioned were the following: David Jaffe's video "Getting Healthy Staying Healthy," recordings of prior presentations, and model curriculum.



7. One jurisdiction (Minnesota) mentioned placing brochure racks in the restrooms.

#### 4. *Off-campus contact with law students*

Twenty-two jurisdictions provided information regarding off-campus LAP-law student outreach or information dissemination. Responses from twelve jurisdictions indicated that they did not provide off-campus support specifically for law students. The remaining jurisdictions did not respond to this part of the survey.

The following is a list of the off-campus events and activities reported by the twenty-two jurisdictions that responded to this question:

- Wellness programs and events (n=4)
- Fundraisers (n=2)
- Retreats (n=2)
- Individual meetings with students (n=3)
- Support groups (n=5)
- Counseling (n=2)
- Assessments (n=3)
- Presentations (n=2)
- Phone support (n=3)
- 12-step meetings (n=1)
- Services at swearing-in ceremony (n=1)

#### 5. *Policy discussion*<sup>8</sup>

When asked about what method had been the most effective, twenty-five jurisdictions responded. The following is a list of responses to the question:

- Presenting personal stories to law students (n=9)
- Referrals from ethics classes, law school deans, advisors (n=3)
- Presentations, especially using PowerPoint (n=3)
- Panels of young lawyers and judges (n=2)
- Tailoring presentations for the law school audience (n=2)
- Stress management programs and discussions (n=2)
- Establishing a relationship between LAP representatives and law school deans and faculty (n=1)
- Brochure information in orientation packets (n=1)
- Providing food at events (n=1)
- Monthly support groups (n=1)
- Professors offering to take students to AA (n=1)

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8. This survey asked individual LAP representatives to speculate as to what methods have been the most successful. To really determine what has worked would require a more systematic analysis (including surveying law students directly). However, the information provided here can serve as a good starting point for a policy dialogue on this topic.

- On-campus wellness events (n=1)
- Discussions targeted at character and fitness issues (n=1)
- Information about continued support after law school (n=1)
- Orientation presentation and a mid-semester follow-up (n=1)
- Assessments (n=1)
- An informal lunch with LAP volunteers/members (n=1)
- Developing personal relationships between LAP members and law students (n=1)
- Swearing-in ceremony presentations (n=1)
- Danny Hill video (n=1)
- Bookmarks, stress balls, and pens (n=1)

A number of themes arose in the survey results that might provide a foundation for policy discussions. These themes are discussed below.

### *1. Personal stories*

The most commonly cited method in response to the question of what has been most effective was the presentation of personal stories. Nine jurisdictions specifically indicated that personal stories were effective. Other methods that tapped into this idea of making personal connections were raised as well. Several jurisdictions referred to the development of personal relationships (between law students and LAP volunteers), bringing in panels of young lawyers, and small roundtable discussions. One jurisdiction in particular indicated that it was very effective to bring in a panel of young lawyers who had recently graduated from the same law school to tell personal stories.

### *2. Developing LAP-law school administration relationships*

Another theme that arose throughout the survey was that of the relationship LAPs had with their law school administrations. Although the survey did not specifically ask about this, many commented on this topic suggesting that developing good relationships with administration is important. One respondent explicitly mentioned this in the final question about effective methods. Two other respondents mentioned the effectiveness of receiving referrals from law school deans and faculty in the final question. Throughout the survey, there appeared to be a lot of variability in the expectations LAPs had regarding continued invitations to present at orientation and in ethics classes, suggesting variability in LAP-law school dynamics. One respondent commented that some faculty members are more open to giving up class time than others, suggesting that faculty interest and willingness may mediate LAP access to in-class time.

### *3. Tailoring information for the law school setting*

A policy theme that arose throughout the survey was the concept of tailoring information to the law school setting. First, a number of survey respondents indicated the need to provide information to students at several points during their law school careers. One respondent indicated that law students are bombarded with information during orientation and, therefore, a follow-up presentation can help remind them of the LAP services.

Second, many survey respondents discussed the fact that students' needs and concerns change throughout their time in law school. Orientation presentations, for example, would be about what to expect in law school and an overview of LAP services. Third year law students, on the other hand, are more concerned about the character and fitness exam and career services issues. To address this, the Florida LAP provides information tailored to each specific year. Other jurisdictions mentioned the importance of letting 3Ls know that LAP support continues after law school.

### *4. Peer volunteer programs*

One creative and interesting idea mentioned by a couple of LAPs was the idea of establishing a volunteer program where law students or young lawyers can provide continued and regular support to their law school peers. The New York LAP respondent said "we've also been asked to train LAP Student Reps and assist in training volunteers for other campus peer-assistance programs." Maine has set up a similar program. The Maine LAP respondent said "we have also established a small group of law student volunteers to provide peer support. Each member of the group went through our peer volunteer training." Such peer support programs could be a good solution for LAPs that, due to the number of law schools or their locations, have difficulty making regular visits.

