The mission of the Standing Committee on the Delivery of Legal Services is to maximize access to legal services and justice for moderate-income people, those who do not qualify for legal aid or pro bono assistance, yet who do not have the discretionary income to access traditional legal services. This mission is pursued through four goals:

• To identify, evaluate and advance innovative and exemplary models and develop mechanisms designed to meet the legal needs of moderate-income persons within the marketplace of legal commerce;
• To research and identify the scope, dynamics and impact of the unmet legal needs of moderate-income people;
• To reach out to the legal community and encourage the ABA, other bar associations and stakeholders to actively respond to the unmet legal needs of those of moderate incomes; and
• To identify policies, rules and laws that have an impact on access to legal services for those of moderate income; advance those that create improved access to meet legal needs; and identify, debate and challenge those that create barriers.

Models – With funding from the ABA Enterprise Fund, the Committee and 10 collaborators have developed a series of online legal checkups. The checkups are designed to help people understand when their problems have legal solutions and who can provide assistance. The checkups address family, housing, consumer and employment law. The checkups are being deployed through various online providers such as legal aid, law libraries and women’s centers. The Project will evaluate their usage and explore the best technology platforms for their dissemination. It will present its analysis in a final report in early 2018.

Since 1995, the Louis M. Brown Award for Legal Access has served as a showcase for exemplary models of legal services delivery. The Brown Award recognizes entities that foster the commitment to affordable legal services to those of moderate incomes. Thirty-six nominees competed for the Award in 2017, with the very creative California-based Sustainable Economies Law Center receiving the top honor. In addition to the Award recipients selected by the Committee, the Committee launched Brown Select in 2015, giving the public an opportunity to voice their choice and vote for a nominee. Nearly 6,000 votes are logged in 2017. The 2018 Brown Award will be presented at the Midyear Meeting of the National Conference of Bar Presidents in Vancouver in February.

The Committee serves as a central resource for those involved in lawyer incubator programs that foster the development of law practices for recently-admitted lawyers interested in practices focused on under-served populations. The Committee has migrated to the Higher Logic platform to provide a listserv and a depository of materials for the more than 60 current and planned programs, enabling bar associations, law schools and other stakeholders to share their experiences and encourage the development of similar
programs. The Committee is also providing similar support for the growing number of non-profit law firms.

**Research** – The Committee has collected data from more than 34,000 practitioners across the US measuring the extent to which they provide unbundled legal services. A preliminary analysis was presented at the National Unbundling Conference noted below. Extrapolating the data, the Committee concludes that about 300,000 lawyers provide unbundled services, although for many it is small part of their practices. The Committee is also in the midst of research to determine the practice settings and other information from those who have participated in lawyer incubators. Finally, the Committee is collaborating with the Division for Bar Services to structure and provide a uniform multi-state lawyers’ census, in an effort to obtain comprehensive data about practice settings, law firm economics and practice areas served.

**Outreach** - As the only national entity specifically dedicated to the delivery of legal services for those of moderate incomes, the Committee has an extensive outreach component. In the past year, members and staff presented on issues related to the delivery of legal services at the ABA Bar School, the Annual Conference of the Chairs of the Access to Justice Commissions, the 4th Annual Incubator Conference, the Maryland Conference on Building an Effective Limited Scope Practice, and the Chicago Bar Association Symposium on the Future of Legal Services. The center-piece of the Committee’s outreach in 2017 was the National Unbundling Conference, held in conjunction with the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal Systems, in Denver on October 26 – 27, 2017. The Committee developed and participated in the conference programming and is currently focused on follow-up endeavors to craft state-level strategic plans for the advancement of unbundled legal services.

**Policy** – In 2015, the Committee surveyed online resources for self-represented individuals and discovered that these resources, including those from courts and other governmental entities, frequently have no linkage to lawyers or referral services that may assist the website users. As a result, the Committee proposed a resolution to the House of Delegates at the 2016 Annual Meeting to encourage entities that provide online legal forms to include information on where users can find lawyers to provide assistance. The resolution passed and the Committee is now advancing an implementation plan. The Committee is also increasing efforts to implement unbundled legal services. As noted, the goal of the National Unbundling Conference was to develop state strategic plans for the implementation of unbundled legal services. The Committee is preparing supporting materials to assist the states and better exchange information to advance this model of narrowing the justice gap.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles F. Garcia, Chair
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