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**New York City's Most Vulnerable Left Unprotected;  
NYLAG Files Federal Class Action Challenging Unlawful Failure to  
Protect Mentally and Physically Disabled Adults From Harm**

**New York, New York – April 10, 2007** – The New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG) today filed a class-action lawsuit, *Belovic et al. v. Doar et al.*, in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, on behalf of New York City's most vulnerable mentally and physically disabled adults.

Plaintiffs challenge the failures of the City and State to comply with federal and state laws mandating the provision of services to protect adults from harm. The suit targets the City's Adult Protective Services (APS) program, which is responsible for protecting adults who, because of a physical or mental impairment, are unable to care for themselves and who have no one willing or able to assist them. Many APS clients are poor and elderly, all are disabled, and all desperately need APS' help to protect them from harm. The lawsuit is filed on behalf of five plaintiffs and a class of all current and future APS clients who are not receiving or will not receive the protective services to which they are legally entitled.

Plaintiffs include Matilda Belovic, a 94 year-old woman who was taken from her home by APS and put into a nursing home against her will without APS first making required efforts to keep her safe at home, and Madelaine Andrews who cannot walk because of her disabilities and is therefore trapped in her fourth floor walk-up apartment, unable to go downstairs unless she is carried. APS has made no efforts to help her find an accessible apartment or medical care she desperately needs.

"APS promised me they would help me find a new place to live and then completely abandoned me. As a result, I wasn't able to leave my house for over six months, until I had a heart attack and an ambulance came to take me away. APS has not done anything to help me," said Ms. Andrews.

APS is mandated to provide a wide range of services, including eviction prevention; financial management; applying for guardians; help obtaining government benefits such as public assistance, Medicaid, home care, food stamps, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI); heavy duty home cleaning; and protection from physical and economic harm.

Unfortunately, APS' mandate to help vulnerable New Yorkers often goes unfulfilled. Its caseworkers are under-trained and overworked. As a result, elderly and disabled New Yorkers go hungry, are shut away in nursing homes unnecessarily, or go without medical care they desperately need.

Plaintiffs present claims under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, the federal and state constitutions, and New York Social Services Law.

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**About NYLAG**

Founded in 1990, the New York Legal Assistance Group is a not-for-profit law office providing free civil legal services to low-income New Yorkers. For more information, please visit <http://www.nylag.org>.