Speaker Bios – March 19, 2026 Half-Day Educational Conference

Deanna Mirro Altmann, RNC, LNC
Risk Management Consultant
MLMIC Insurance Company

Deanna Mirro-Altmann, RNC, LNC is a Risk Management Consultant for the New York metropolitan area. Deanna graduated New York University School of Nursing with a Bachelor of Science degree. In addition, she has a second Bachelor of Science degree in Paralegal Studies with Business Administration from St. John's University. During her career, she worked as a women's health staff nurse and per-diem nurse on ante-partum, labor and delivery, post-partum, newborn nursery units and medical surgical units with a patient population in geriatrics, orthopedics, and neurosurgery. She has experience in home care management and participation in quality management and performance improvement activities for the adult population. She recently had the opportunity to be a part of a home care management preceptor program which partnered a Long Island based home care agency and the nursing program at Farmingdale State College. She actively maintains a certification in In-Patient Obstetrics through The National Certification Corporation.

Throughout her career as a Legal Nurse Consultant Deanna has reviewed and analyzed medical records and malpractice claims to identify liability issues and compliance with best practices and the standard of care. As a litigation paralegal she has worked in regulatory compliance and the defense of toxic tort claims.

Rafi Cheema, Esq.
Attorney
MLMIC Insurance Company

Rafi Cheema is an attorney at the MLMIC Legal Department. Mr. Cheema is an experienced litigator, representing physicians, dentists, healthcare professionals, and hospitals in the defense of malpractice. This includes representing and defending physicians, dentists, and healthcare professionals in professional malpractice and negligence litigation from claim status through trial. He provides legal advice to healthcare providers, dentists, and medical facilities on risk management issues, healthcare law, and professional liability.

As a member of the editorial board of MLMIC Insurance Company's issue of The Scope, Mr. Cheema has also been a contributing author for those publications. Mr. Cheema is admitted to the New York State Bar and received his Juris Doctor from the Hofstra University School of Law and his Bachelor of Arts from City University of New York.

Emily Fernandez, Esq.
Partner
Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker, LLP

Emily Fernandez litigates medical malpractice and nursing home cases in state and federal court through and including trial to verdict. Her clients include prominent hospitals, EMS providers, nursing homes, doctors, nurses and other health care providers. Emily is a Regional Representative of the firm's Medical Malpractice & Health Care Practice Team and is active in the firm's Women Attorneys Valued and Empowered (WAVE) initiative, which promotes advancement of female attorneys. Emily lectures to clients and on panels, and she publishes on current trends in the law relating to medical malpractice litigation. Emily is a talented, diverse, female trial attorney, who excels at advocacy and ingenuity. She solves problems and gets results.

Ashley Humphries, Esq.
Partner
Wilson Elser Moskowitz Edelman & Dicker, LLP

Ashley Humphries defends physicians, hospitals and other health care providers against high-exposure, complex medical malpractice claims. She is involved in all stages of litigation, including drafting and orally arguing motions, conducting discovery, performing legal research and lawsuit evaluations, and representing the firm's clients in court appearances. Prior to joining Wilson Elser, Ashley was an associate at an insurance defense firm where she represented clients in nursing home, labor and employment, and general liability disputes.

While attending law school, Ashley participated in the Immigration Clinic, where she successfully defended clients seeking asylum. Ashley also clerked for the Honorable Anne E. Lazarus, Superior Court of Pennsylvania. While in Florida, Ashley worked on numerous *pro bono* cases, including representing adult and juvenile defendants in all aspects of criminal and appellate litigation. Additionally, she represented various individuals in civil matters, including foreclosure proceedings, contract disputes and landlord/tenant disputes.

Alejandra Gil, Esq.
Partner
Heidell Pittoni Murphy & Bach, LLP

Alejandra R. Gil is a Partner and member of the DEI Committee at Heidell, Pittoni, Murphy & Bach, LLP. Her practice is primarily focused on the defense of medical providers and institutions in malpractice matters. Alejandra also defends medical providers and New York City Department of Correction employees in Civil Rights actions brought in Federal Court. She handles all aspects of litigation, in addition to appellate practice, including providing appellate assessments to trial attorneys, drafting briefs, and arguing appeals in the Appellate Division. Prior to joining HPM&B, Alejandra was an associate at a firm in the Hudson Valley where she represented defendants in medical malpractice matters. She also worked as an Assistant District Attorney in Bronx County for over six years where she prosecuted crimes including robberies and attempted murders, from the arrest until trial. Alejandra is a member of the New York State Bar Association and the New York State Medical Defense Bar Association. She served as president of the Hudson Valley Hispanic Bar Association from 2022-2023 and is currently on the Board of Governors. She is fluent in Spanish.

Karen Grottalio, Esq.
Senior Trial Partner
Heidell Pittoni Murphy & Bach, LLP

Karen Grottalio is a Senior Trial Partner and a member of the Executive Committee at Heidell, Pittoni, Murphy and Bach. She specializes in Medical Malpractice and regularly represents and defends healthcare practitioners and major medical centers in medical liability litigation matters. She also handles nursing home and mixed medical/general negligence cases. Karen is a seasoned trial lawyer and has tried multiple complicated medical malpractice cases to verdict in many of the lower New York State venues. She regularly defends clients in high exposure, complex cases that involve neurologically impaired infants and adults and claims of catastrophic injuries. In addition to defending clients at trial, she is highly experienced in all phases of pre-trial proceedings in both state and federal court, mediating cases and in counseling clients on risk management issues. Karen is a member of the New York State Bar Association and the Bronx Bar Association. She has lectured at our firm's in-house seminars and at the New York State Trial Lawyers Institute, specifically in seminars that are geared toward young lawyers. She has been at the firm since 1998, a partner since 2003.