A nationally recognized authority in the field of elder law, Medicare, Medicaid and the use of trusts in health care planning, David Goldfarb is the managing partner of the law firm of Goldfarb Abrandt Salzman & Kutzin LLP and the co-author of New York Elder Law. We interviewed David to gain some insight on his background and experience in the field of elder law, as well as how he sees the sector evolving in the future.

Tell me a little bit about your practice.

We are a small firm of eight attorneys. Almost all of our clients are individuals and families doing estate planning and planning for healthcare coverage. We do elder law, trusts and estates, guardianships, estate administration, estate planning, wills, powers of attorneys and healthcare proxies. We particularly tend to work with the families of people who need long-term care, but we try to get people to plan in advance so that they’re covered in the event that they need services.

Tell me about any industry-wide changes you’re seeing in small and midsize law. Have these changes presented opportunities, challenges or both, and what are you doing to address them?

Obviously the biggest change is that so much is done with automation. Case management, client record keeping, research, billing, etc. is now automated, and keeping up with the technology can be a challenge for some attorneys. Along with this shift comes a change in how clients expect to be communicated with—for example, with digital communication comes more concern about attorney-client privilege and confidentiality. It’s important to educate clients about what they should or shouldn’t put in electronic communications. For example, I warn my clients to never send anything over work email since New York law doesn’t always cover work email under attorney-client privilege.

What LexisNexis® product(s) do you use in your business?

We use Lexis Advance® at my practice. I am also a LexisNexis author, so I co-write the Treatise on New York Elder Law. We update the Treatise every year and it’s in its 20th release.

Where do you see yourself, your firm, and the industry three years from now?

In my area of practice, a lot will shift depending on how the laws change. For example, “Medicare for All” would change the long-term services we deal with now. Practitioners really have to stay on top of what is happening. Hopefully any upcoming changes will positively affect our clients.

What’s your favorite part about your job, and what’s the most challenging?

My favorite thing about what I do is working with new clients, learning about their personal and unique needs and then finding solutions to the issues they’re facing. The most challenging part is simply that I don’t enjoy going to court on contested or conflicting matters, though occasionally we have to do that.
If you could give new lawyers one piece of advice, what would that be?
Lawyers need to stay involved with things like bar associations and other legal communities—it is so important for staying current on the issues. I’d also advise newer lawyers to continue doing research and writing in order to get their name out there—it’s essential to becoming an expert in your field.

In one sentence, describe what being a lawyer means to you.
It means helping people and resolving problems through an analysis of the laws.

How do you like to spend your time when you are not at work?
My wife and I have a farm, which is our vacation place on the weekends. I work in the city in the Empire State Building, but on the weekends I can get away and go to a rural community, which is a nice change of pace. I am also interested in historic preservation in New York City and am involved with a number of groups in the city dealing with preservation of historic buildings.

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