



# UPDATE

Food and Drug Law, Regulation and Education

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The "Everything" Issue — Food, Drugs, Animal Drugs, Biologics, Cosmetics, Diagnostics, Dietary Supplements, Medical Devices, Tobacco



## 2012 Annual Conference

*We'll See You There!*

FDA Leadership Participation

Emerging & Global Issues

Hot Topic Break-Outs

Networking Opportunities

*Agenda and more coverage on pages 8-37*

Cover Features Food Week Photos  
(more coverage inside)



**AZIM CHOWDHURY** is an Associate at the law firm of Keller and Heckman LLP in Washington, DC.

**How did you end up practicing in this area of law and what type of advice would you give to other new attorneys hoping to practice in your field?**

When I entered private practice, I actually had no plans of practicing food and drug law. Having graduated with a JD/MBA from the University of Maryland and completed a judicial clerkship on the Maryland Court of Special Appeals, I was trying to figure out whether I wanted to pursue litigation or corporate law. It was during my second year that I was introduced to the practice of food and drug law, when I was fortuitously presented with the opportunity to work with several pharmaceutical and medical device clients dealing with issues before the FDA. I soon became a member of FDLI, and began contributing to the *Associates Corner* column of *Update*. In March 2010, I joined Keller and Heckman LLP, which has one of the largest food and drug practices in the world, to focus on and further develop my expertise.

My advice to all attorneys is to follow your passion - don't let any preconceived notions you may have about the practice of law box you into a career path. Law students and young attorneys interested in food and drug law should learn about the FDA and the types of products it regulates, attend FDLI conferences, and talk to experienced attorneys to gain a perspective on the kind of work that we do.

**What are some of your career highlights so far and what are a few aspirations you have for the future?**

The highlight of my career (so far) is actually not related to my food and drug practice, but to my pro bono work. I recently had the opportunity to assist a young boy and his family obtain asylum in the United States. My clients had fled their home country of El Salvador because of physical violence and threats of death they faced at the hands of the notorious, internationally known criminal enterprise, the Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13). Although asylum is rarely granted to the victims of gang-based violence abroad, the Executive Office of Immigration Review agreed that my clients' case was distinguishable from other cases involving victims of gang violence. The Executive Office of Immigration Review agreed that my clients' case was distinguishable from other cases involving victims of gang violence. I continue to represent the family today, and we are now in the process of applying for legal permanent resident status.

**You edited FDLI's Tobacco Regulation and Compliance: An Essential Resource book. How has FDLI contributed to your career so far?**

My work with FDLI has greatly contributed to the development of my expertise in tobacco product regulation by the FDA relating to the implementation of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act. Not long after I joined FDLI, I was asked to write an article for the *Associates Corner* column of *Update* on any topic related to food and drug law. My article, "How will the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act Impact the Electronic Cigarette Industry" (November 2009) was one of the first articles to analyze whether electronic cigarettes could fall within meaning of a drug-delivery device under the FDCA. FDLI recognized my expertise, and asked me to edit its first publication focused exclusively on tobacco - "Tobacco Regulation and Compliance: An Essential Resource." Completing the book was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.