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Polsinelli, Shughart sees consistent growth with hiring of four lawyers

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When Anthony J. Nasharr III joined Polsinelli, Shughart P.C.'s new Chicago office in 2006, it consisted of six lawyers.

With the recent hiring of four first-year associates, the Chicago office roster now stands at 69 lawyers.

"It's been a welcome level of growth," said Nasharr, managing director of the Chicago office. "It's been steady."

The Kansas City, Mo.-based law firm consists of about 640 lawyers working in 17 cities across the nation. It recently hired 19 new associates across five offices.

The four new associates in Chicago are Lindsay R. Kessler, Mustafa A. Neak, Hannah L. Neshek and Nicole A. Poulos. Those four became licensed Illinois lawyers earlier this month.

Poulos, who works on commercial litigation, said she's accompanied more-experienced lawyers to the Cook County Circuit Court for case management status hearings.

"I'm getting the opportunity to enhance my skills and develop my practice learning under mentors," she said.

She said she witnessed Polsinelli, Shughart's growth working as a clerk at its Chicago office, while an undergraduate student.

"One of the reasons I joined



Nicole A. Poulos

here is because our business model is collaborative, rather than city focused," she said. "That allows for interaction with attorneys in my practice group from Los Angeles to New York and really creates a synergy as if we're in the same location."

Kessler and Neshek work in the firm's health-care practice group.

The Chicago office's health-care practice started with one lawyer about four years ago, compared with 25 lawyers today, Nasharr said.

In 2008, Polsinelli, Shughart's national health-care practice group totaled 22 lawyers, but today stands at 80 lawyers, he said.

The needs related to the healthcare practice and an



Anthony J. Nasharr III

increased workload led to that level of growth, he said.

The firm's other practice areas with increased growth include labor and employment, real estate, along with corporate transactions and financial services, he said.

Neak works in the firm's real estate and transactions group.

"The four (associates hired) here were because of practice group needs that could accommodate first-year associate growth, Nasharr said. "Those are practice groups that had the need for and the ability to train younger associates."

Neak said he shadowed the firm's partners and sat in during real estate transactions.

The main challenge facing Neak involves learning new



Mustafa A. Neak

jargon and other aspects of the job, he said.

"Because of the attention and mentorship I get from the partners in the real estate group, it makes the learning aspect of it more enjoyable and successful," he said.

During Polsinelli, Shughart's recently ended fiscal year on Oct. 31, its Chicago office hired 18 new lawyers, including a dozen lateral partners and six associates, Nasharr said.

The firm recently added a third floor in its Chicago office that can now house up to 107 lawyers, he said.

As for future hiring of lawyers, "We'll fill those needs as opportunities arise," he said. "We're not chasing a need to fill these offices at all."