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Do you have enough food?

**The Medical-Legal Partnership Project is changing the culture of pediatric practice.**



The MLPP works with pediatric and family medicine providers to encourage a holistic approach to children's health care.

Children and their families often need legal assistance to help them resolve medical problems.

The MLPP offers six basic questions to help medical practitioners assess each family situation

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Are your housing conditions safe?

3

Is there enough money to pay for basic necessities?

4

Do you have problems getting your health insurance to pay for services or medications?

5

Is your child receiving an appropriate education?

6

Are you or your family victims of domestic violence?

### Case Spotlight

#### Unemployment Insurance: Caring for the Severely Disabled Child

Krista is a severely impaired eight year old with cerebral palsy, hydrocephalus, hearing impairment, sleep disorder and feeding difficulties. Her mother, Rita, worked as a job coach with a mid-size employer for over two years. The employer hired Rita will full knowledge of her daughter's disability.

Rita left work early one day to arrange a fitting for Krista's leg brace. Her supervisor said she was "leaving early too often" and told Rita that she was fired. Shocked that she was discharged because she had to care for her daughter, Rita submitted a letter of resignation. When she filed to collect unemployment benefits, the Department of Labor (DOL) ruled her ineligible because she had voluntarily quit her job. Rita appealed to the DOL's Appeals Division and a nurse-practitioner working with Krista referred Rita to the MLPP for immediate intervention.

Working with Krista's clinicians, the MLPP challenged the DOL's denial at an administrative hearing. With Rita's testimony and legal documentation secured by the MLPP from Krista's clinicians, the Appeals Division ruled the termination a "discharge" and reversed the benefits denial.



### Medical-Legal Partnership Project

A project of the Center for Children's Advocacy.  
[www.kidscounsel.org/mlpp](http://www.kidscounsel.org/mlpp)

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#### MLPP Resources Available to Attorneys and Medical Practitioners

**Education and Outreach**  
Education and training to support advocacy.

**Pediatric Resource Card**  
Information on resources for medical practitioners.

**Adolescent Health Care: Legal Rights of Teens**  
Questions and answers regarding teen healthcare.

**Teen Dating Violence and Teen Legal Rights**  
Publications and seminars on important topics.

**Pediatric Residency Training and Elective Courses**  
With University of Connecticut School of Medicine's pediatric residency program, including Developmental/Behavioral and Adolescent Medicine

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**Medical Legal Partnership Project**  
Center for Children's Advocacy



**Caring for poor children whose medical needs are not being met.**

**Preventive, multidisciplinary approach to improving children's health outcomes.**

The Medical-Legal Partnership Project (MLPP) is a unique partnership of organizations that improves children's health outcomes by bringing together providers who ensure that basic needs are met for the child and for the family.

**Proactive legal assistance in a supportive healthcare environment.**

The Medical-Legal Partnership provides legal representation as part of a comprehensive approach to a child's healthcare needs.

Working with a team of health, mental health and social service providers, the MLPP secures legal interventions that alleviate many of the difficulties faced by a family with a child who is ill.



**Improving Children's Health Outcomes**

**Growing up in poverty presents a serious threat to a child's health.**

Children who live in poverty are exposed to serious health risks at a higher rate, and come from families that are often not equipped to secure appropriate care for their children when they are ill or injured.

**Hartford children are at particular risk.**

Hartford has the second highest child poverty rate in the nation among cities with a population exceeding 100,000. Minority groups are especially vulnerable as they experience racial disparities in access to health care, language or cultural barriers, and are more likely to be poor.

**Who is eligible for MLPP services?**

The MLPP represents low-income families, and there is no charge for its services. Referrals are received from affiliated pediatric and family medicine providers, and on site at walk-in clinics throughout the city.

**Offices throughout the community.**

Community-based locations allow families to easily reach the MLPP. Medical-legal advocacy is available to nearly 100% of the city's poor children. The MLPP has offices at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center and the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. The collaborative also works on site at the Burgdorf/ Bank of America Health Center, Charter Oak Health Center, and Community Health Services, Inc.

**Eliminating barriers.**

The MLPP provides proactive legal assistance in a healthcare setting. We are devoted to providing the legal intervention to improve health outcomes:

- Legal representation of children whose healthcare needs are not being met
- Cross-disciplinary response to complex health issues
- Medical-legal systemic advocacy
- Comprehensive training to pediatric providers

**Spotlight**

**Providing Training and Systemic Advocacy**

Connecticut recently attempted to significantly reduce Medicaid (HUSKY) benefits to low-income children and families by imposing premiums and co-pays for medical services and prescription drugs. As part of a focus on systemic advocacy, the MLPP worked with clinical partners to develop a strategy, based on the public health risks associated with these drastic benefit reductions, to fight Connecticut's plan.

The partnership initiated plans for multidisciplinary trainings, which included Grand Rounds presentations entitled, "A Crisis in Pediatric Care: How Proposed Medicaid Cuts will Affect Public Health." Teamed with other legal, public health, and social service organizations, the MLPP successfully stopped the proposed coverage reductions. Working through the state's legislative process, the MLPP helped ensure that critical HUSKY benefits will remain available to Connecticut's most vulnerable children.



**Case Spotlight**

**Medicaid Denial: Ensuring Coverage for Medically Necessary Services**

Luis, eleven years old, required a surgical procedure that his care team determined to be "medically necessary." When contacted for authorization, Luis' managed care Medicaid carrier (MCO) denied coverage for the procedure, based on their determination that the proposed surgery was "cosmetic."

A referral to the MLPP resulted in an aggressive advocacy strategy. Working with the pediatric clinical experts, including plastic surgeons and nurse practitioners, the MLPP pursued its challenge to the MCO's denial at an administrative hearing and subsequently in state court.

After several setbacks, and despite significant opposition from both the MCO and the state Department of Social Services, the MLPP persuaded the MCO to reverse its earlier decision and the surgery was approved on grounds of "medical necessity."

MLPP is a joint medical-legal collaboration between the Center for Children's Advocacy, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Charter Oak Health Center, Community Health Services, Inc., and Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center.

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