

# NEW BRITAIN HERALD

The New Britain Herald (newbritainherald.com), Serving New Britain, Conn., and surrounding areas

## **Medical-Legal Partnership Project awarded \$25,000 grant**

Wednesday, February 15, 2012 10:59 PM EST

By Scott Whipple, Staff Writer

NEW BRITAIN — A unique partnership between attorneys and a local hospital can continue to help children stricken with muscular dystrophy get around more easily thanks to a \$25,000 grant from American Savings Foundation.

The grant supports the work of the Hospital of Central Connecticut's Medical-Legal Partnership Project, which has helped 145 at-risk children from area low-income families receive medical care. Through the project, the hospital works with the Center for Children's Advocacy, a Connecticut-based non-profit agency that provides legal services for at risk children. HOCC pediatricians and the center's MLPP attorneys work together to improve children's health by striving to improve health care access and reduce adverse social factors.

The project serves low-income families who are uninsured or under-insured in Greater New Britain, Bristol, Southington, Plainville and Berlin.

"Given the current climate of fiscal constraint we're fortunate the foundation renewed this grant," said John Trouern-Trend, MD, HOCC interim chief of Pediatrics. "Without it, MLPP couldn't have continued."

Asthmatic patients also benefit from the program's ability to promote improvement in substandard living conditions, reducing patients' asthma triggers.

Bonnie Roswig, senior staff attorney for the MLPP of the CCA, said this legal representation "de-mystifies the legal process. It helps families navigate through complex legal issues."

MLPP began representing a boy with muscular dystrophy in 2010 after he was denied Social Security child disability benefits. His progressive muscle weakness threatened to damage his heart.

"You really need a lawyer to navigate through the process," said Roswig, who submitted extensive medical documentation and analysis of why the child should be eligible for benefits. She also represented his mother at an appeals hearing. The child now receives nearly \$700 a month to help pay for medical care. Roswig also secured aid to make sure the school provided a wheelchair and transportation.

In addition, ASF funds support training for physicians, other healthcare providers and social service staff on legal issues affecting children's health. The foundation gave two previous \$25,000 grants to the MLPP in 2008 and 2010.

"Every child deserves the chance to succeed," said David Davison, president and CEO of American Savings Foundation. "Chronic health issues shouldn't hold a child back. This program makes sure children and families get the help they deserve. We see the results; that's why we continue to fund this project."

URL: <http://www.newbritainherald.com/articles/2012/02/15/news/doc4f3c7c57745bb709276840.prt>

© Copyright 2012 The New Britain Herald, a Central Connecticut Communications Property. All rights reserved.