

Medical-Legal Partnership Project

Improving Children's Health Outcomes

The Center for Children's Advocacy Medical-Legal Partnership Project (MLPP) began in 2000 as Connecticut's first medical-legal collaboration and the second project of its kind in the United States.

The Center's MLPP is now a national leader, providing interdisciplinary legal intervention and working with collaborative partners to address healthcare disparities on behalf of children at risk both locally and nationally.



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 much higher rate than other children. Their families are often not equipped to secure appropriate care when they are ill or injured.

Connecticut's children are at particular risk.

The child poverty rate in Connecticut's largest cities is alarming. Minority groups are especially vulnerable as they experience 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 provides legal advocacy for low-income families. There is no charge for services. Referrals are received from pediatric and family medicine providers, and at MLPP clinics on site at walk-in community healthcare clinics.

Offices are located throughout the community.

Community-based locations allow families to easily access medical-legal advocacy services. The MLPP has offices at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, The Hospital of Central Connecticut, Yale-New Haven Hospital, Burgdorf/Bank of America Health Center, and Charter Oak Health Center.

The MLPP connects families to legal help and eliminates barriers to health care.

The MLPP provides on-site legal intervention in a healthcare setting. We improve children's health outcomes through:

- Representation of families on legal issues that affect their children's health
- Cross-disciplinary response to complex health issues
- Medical-legal systemic advocacy
- Comprehensive training for pediatric, family medicine and behavioral health providers

Working with healthcare providers changes the culture of care.

The MLPP trains, supports and collaborates with healthcare and mental health providers to address the complexities of poverty-related health issues and opportunities for improved care. Training opportunities include:

- Hospital-wide trainings, grand rounds, and legal advocacy seminars
- Small group sessions for pediatric departments
- Individual consultations
- Conference presentations to medical, social work and legal providers
- Consultations and information for community providers
- Training for students, residents and fellows in pediatric, family medicine and psychiatry programs at our partner hospitals and medical schools

Changing the System

The MLPP's work impacts not only individuals, but the system as a whole. Healthcare partners collaborate with MLPP attorneys to identify systemic issues that will lead to improved healthcare outcomes for our most vulnerable children. Priority areas include:

- Legislative reform and advocacy
- Communication with state agencies to address inequities in care
- Enforcement of state and federal protections

Areas of Legal Representation

The Medical-Legal Partnership Project represents clients in matters including:

- **Medicaid Advocacy**
- **Public Benefits**
- **Disability Rights**
- **Teen Legal Rights**
- **Educational Rights**
- **Housing**
- **Utility Protection**
- **Immigrants and Refugees**



The Medical-Legal Partnership Project is a collaboration between the Center for Children's Advocacy, Connecticut Children's Medical Center, Charter Oak Health Center, Burgdorf/Bank of America Health Center, Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center, The Hospital of Central Connecticut and Yale-New Haven Hospital.

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Changing the Culture of Pediatric Practice

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

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



Six Basic Questions

Asking these questions can help medical providers assess each family situation.

1. Do you have enough food?
2. 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 and medications?
5. Is your child receiving an appropriate education?
6. Do you have a disabled child who needs support at home, in school, or in the community?

Charlotte

Charlotte has Down Syndrome. She was excited about the upcoming school trip to a nature preserve and had been talking to her mom for weeks about the animals she would see.

The Center's MLPP attorney has worked with Charlotte's family for the past few years. She helped the family get disability benefits for Charlotte and made sure that Charlotte received appropriate special education services in school.

This had been an especially difficult year. In addition to Down Syndrome, Charlotte was recently diagnosed with diabetes. Her doctors were pleased with how well she was doing at home and at school.

Charlotte and her mom were devastated when the school informed them that Charlotte could not accompany her classmates to the nature preserve because of her diabetes.

It is a violation of the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to exclude children from participating in school trips simply because of a disability. Diabetes is no exception and the MLPP intervened on Charlotte's behalf.



We contacted the Justice Department, and together we convinced the school to reverse their decision.

The MLPP and the U.S. Attorney's office in Connecticut are part of a collaborative that travels the state to educate schools, camps, child care programs, and more on the requirements of the ADA.

There was no one happier than Charlotte with the outcome. "She had so much fun!" said Charlotte's mother.

Medical-Legal Partnership Project Publications and Resources

Publications and More Information

kidscounsel.org/mlpp

Adolescent Health Care: Legal Rights of Teens

Answers common questions for pediatric, family medicine and behavioral health providers.

Legal Rights Guides for Providers and Families

Topics include Special Education, SSI, Employment Law, Access to College for Disabled Students, Utility Shut Off, Protecting Children with Disabilities.

Quick Guide to Important Resources

Contact information for patients' services and benefits.

Quick Guide to Supplemental Security Income

Eligibility, application and appeals information.

Legal Rights Pamphlets for Teens

Topics include Teen Dating Violence, Confidential Health Care, Bullying, LGBT, Child Support, Emancipation, Special Education, Immigration, Truancy.

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