



MEDICAL-LEGAL PARTNERSHIP

Dear Colleagues:

In our latest Medical-Legal Partnership COVID-19 Update you will find the most recent relevant information from Governor Lamont's executive orders and press releases, the latest from the state regarding special education matters, as well as information and resources for working with patients and families to access public benefits and CARES relief funds. For a full listing of all of the MLP and Center for Children's Advocacy resource information (including past updates), please visit the Center's COVID-19 page [here](#).

- **270,000 Children to Benefit From \$72.3 Million in Additional SNAP Funding**

Late last week the governor's office announced that the federal government approved \$273 million in new SNAP (food stamps) benefits for children in free and reduced-price lunch programs. The state Department of Social Services (DSS) will issue approximately \$268 in additional SNAP benefits per child enrolled in the free and reduced lunch program, and additional benefits may be provided if schools remain closed past May 20. Further information may be found [here](#), and remember that families who may be eligible and are not already receiving SNAP benefits should apply for SNAP and other state benefits [here](#). *Please urge your patients and families to do so – even if they have never received food stamps before!*

- **Governor Authorizes Additional Flexibility for Medicaid Enrolled Providers to Perform Telehealth Through Audio-Only Methods for NEW PATIENTS.**

Per [Executive Order No. 7FF](#), the prior modified telehealth orders were further modified to expand the definition of "telehealth" to permit telehealth providers who are Medicaid enrolled providers to provide telehealth services to "new or established" patients who are Medicaid recipients through audio-only telephone communications. This order expands audio-only telehealth to *new* patients as well as existing patients.

- **State Department of Education Issues Further Guidance and Clarification on Special Education Matters**

The State Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education (BSE) [issued further guidance and clarification](#) on April 24 focusing on **Planning and Placement Teams (PPT), Annual Reviews, Triennial Evaluations, Developmental Delay as Primary Disability, Extended School Year (summer programming) and Home-School Communication.**

In summary, the six page memorandum provides that:

- The decision to convene a PPT is an individual, student-centered decision.
- School districts are encouraged to work with parents to reach mutually agreeable extension of timelines
- Parents and school districts are encourage to amend existing IEP's without convening a PPT where appropriate
- When PPT's are held during the COVID-19 school closure timeframe, it "may be appropriate" to discuss parent or staff observations of the student's educational performance during the timeframe, as well as other information gathered about the student's needs.
- Annual reviews may be conducted and revisions to an IEP "should be written for implementation in a regular school building and as if schools were operating normally and not for temporary situations ... "

- Annual reviews may be held after the one-year deadline and the student's current IEP would remain in effect until a PPT is convened and the IEP is revised.
- Triennial Reviews may be held but only if the district has completed all of the recommended evaluations as designed prior to school closures.
- Initial Evaluations and eligibility determinations may be made on a case by case basis, but initial eligibility determinations "should not be made with incomplete information."
- Extended School Year determinations may be made and the criteria for ESY has not changed.

Further questions regarding this important update may be made to attorney [Kathryn Meyer](#) or any member of the MLP team listed below.

- **Comprehensive Benefits Training Available from MLP**

Attached you will find a presentation that Disability Rights Project and Senior MLP Attorney [Bonnie Roswig](#) entitled "Help for Connecticut Families" that you might find helpful. In the slides you will find important information regarding cash benefits (TFA), SNAP, SSI, Electricity and Gas protections and other state and federal programs and eligibility criteria for CARES relief money (including TFA recipients).

- **Advocacy Corner – MLP Fights to Expand HUSKY Benefits to Undocumented Children and Youth**

The MLP and its broad base of physician and clinical partners are still working to expand HUSKY benefits to children, youth and their families. Led by physician partners Julia Rosenberg and Marietta Vazquez from Yale-New Haven Hospital, the MLP has sent three separate emails to Governor Lamont requesting this vital policy expansion to protect and support the state's most vulnerable population. If you are a front-line clinician and wish to join the 239 other physician and providers who have signed on to this request, please go [here](#) to add your support.

As is always the case, if you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact any member of the MLP team listed below. Thank you again for all your dedication and hard work in this challenging time.

Sincerely,

The MLP Team

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