

Medical-Legal Partnership at Children's Hospital



The Family Legal Center
is a partnership between
Children's Hospital
and
Louisiana Civil Justice Center



Medical-Legal Partnership

- An alliance between health professionals and lawyers to benefit low-income and at-risk children
- Provides an opportunity for pediatric providers to refer patients for legal assessment in situations where a non-medical obstacle is impairing the overall health of a child.



Why Collaborate?



Louisiana Civil Justice Center



- Statewide non-profit 501(c)3 organization that provides free legal assistance in civil cases to low-income and other vulnerable persons
- Operates toll-free legal aid hotline, community clinics, and court-based help desks
- Particularly focuses on housing, consumer, government benefits, and family law issues

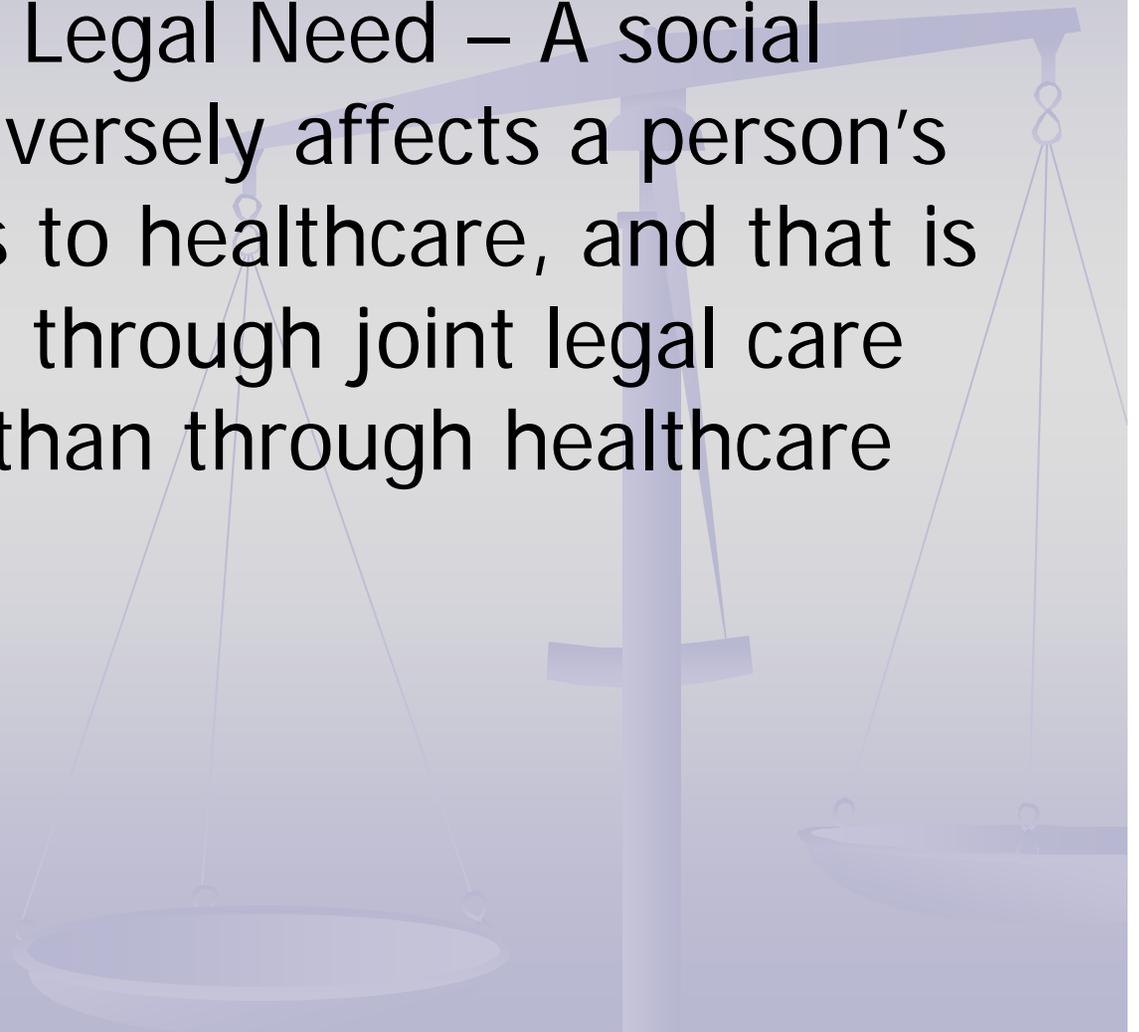
AUTONOMY

INTEGRATION

	Referral Network	Partially Integrated MLP	Fully Integrated MLP
<i>Healthcare institution's view of legal care</i>	Legal needs loosely connected to patient well-being; legal professionals are valued allies, but separate from HC services.	Legal needs connected to patient health; Legal care is complementary/ancillary to HC services.	Legal needs are tightly connected to patient health; Legal care is integrated part of HC services.
<i>Relationship between health-care and legal institutions</i>	Small legal team loosely connected to small number of HC providers who make case referrals for individual assistance.	Legal agency formally recognized by HC institution as a partner, but services often restricted to single unit/clinic. HC engagement at front-lines, but not within HC administration.	Legal institution formally recognized by HC institution as part of healthcare team and service system. HC engagement at all levels including administration.
<i>Patients' access to legal care</i>	Patients are inconsistently screened for health-harming legal needs and have inconsistent access to legal assistance from lawyers. No clinic, population health or preventive legal care offered by institution.	Screened clinic patients get regular access to legal assistance from lawyers, but not all patients and not across institution. Little clinic, population health or preventive legal care offered by institution.	All patients are screened for same health-harming legal needs and have some regular access to legal assistance from lawyers. Clinic, population health and preventive legal care regular part of institution's practice.

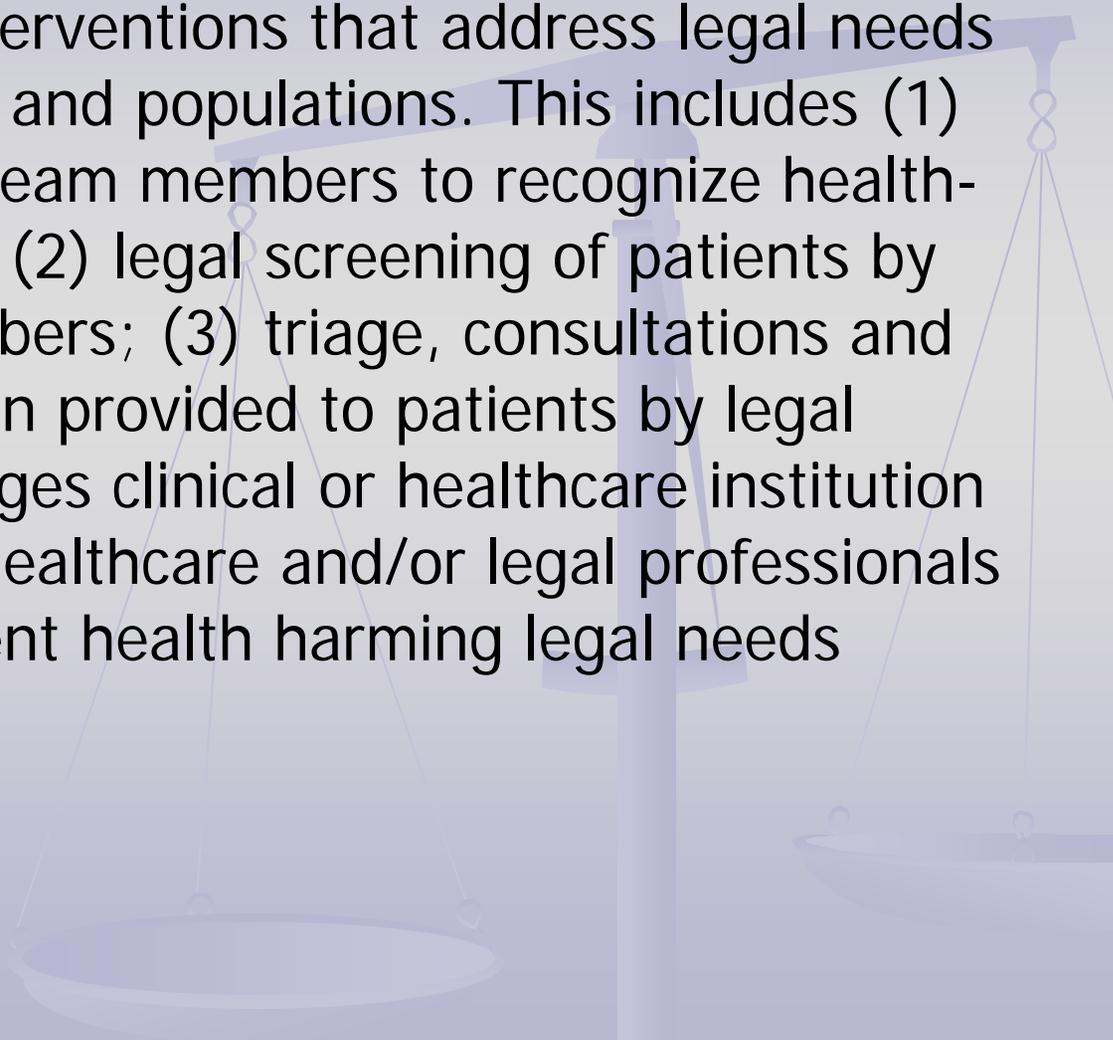
Health-Harming Legal Need

- Health-Harming Legal Need – A social problem that adversely affects a person's health or access to healthcare, and that is better remedied through joint legal care and healthcare than through healthcare services alone.

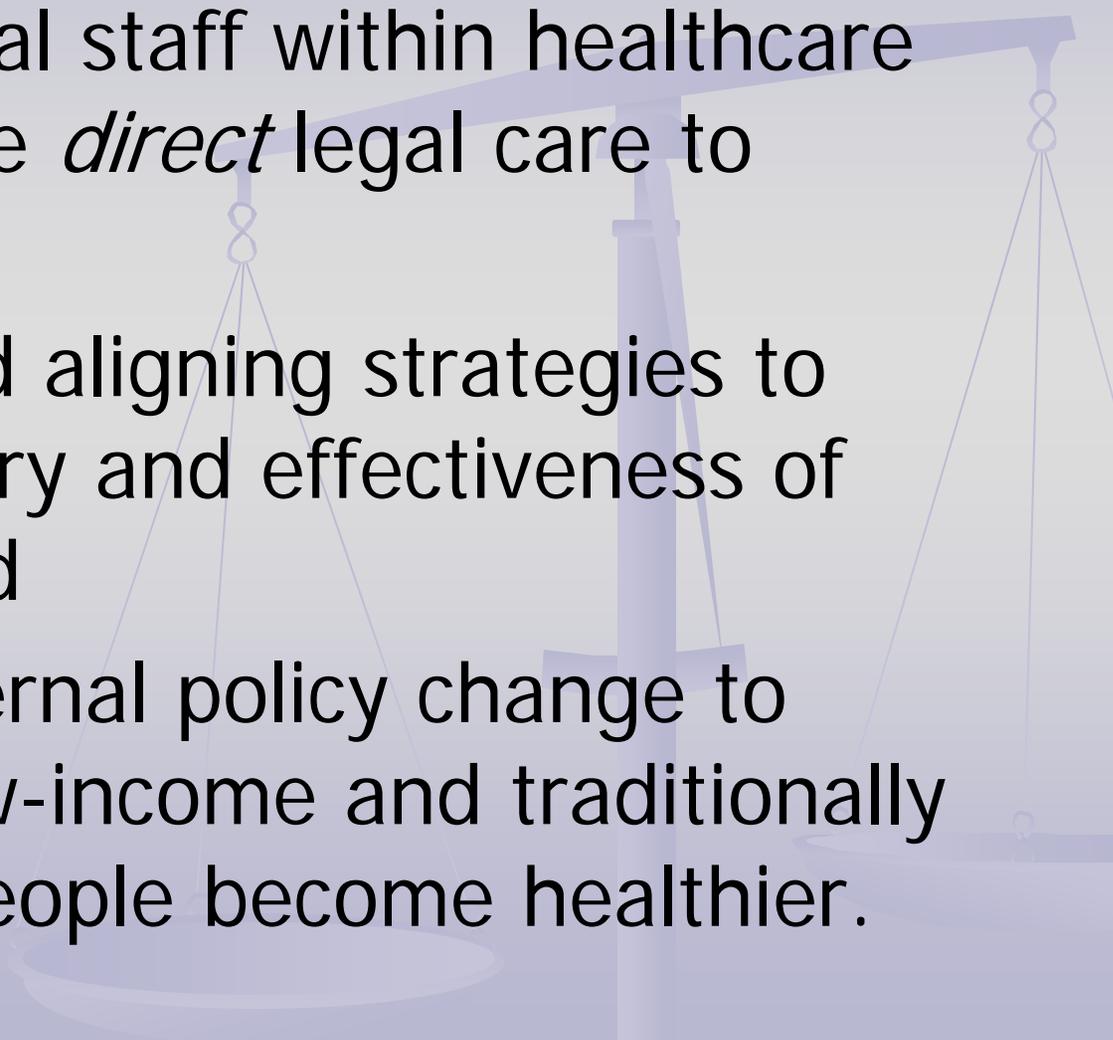


Legal Care

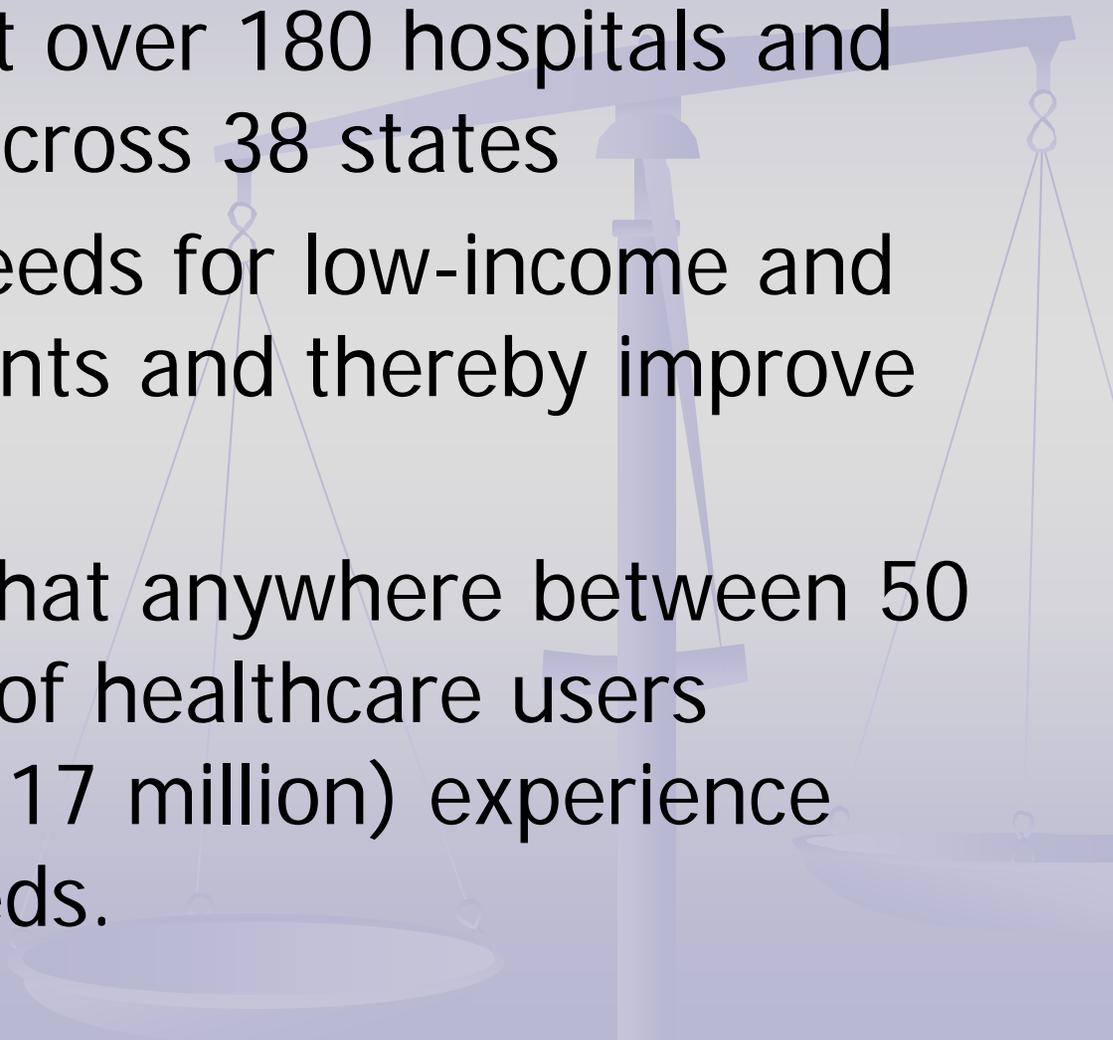
The full spectrum of interventions that address legal needs for individuals, clinics, and populations. This includes (1) training of healthcare team members to recognize health-harming legal needs; (2) legal screening of patients by healthcare team members; (3) triage, consultations and legal representation provided to patients by legal professionals; (4) changes clinical or healthcare institution policy made jointly by healthcare and/or legal professionals to treat and prevent health harming legal needs



Three Pillars of MLP

1. Integrating legal staff within healthcare team to provide *direct* legal care to patients;
 2. Developing and aligning strategies to enhance delivery and effectiveness of healthcare; and
 3. Advancing external policy change to ensure that low-income and traditionally underserved people become healthier.
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Medical-Legal Partnerships



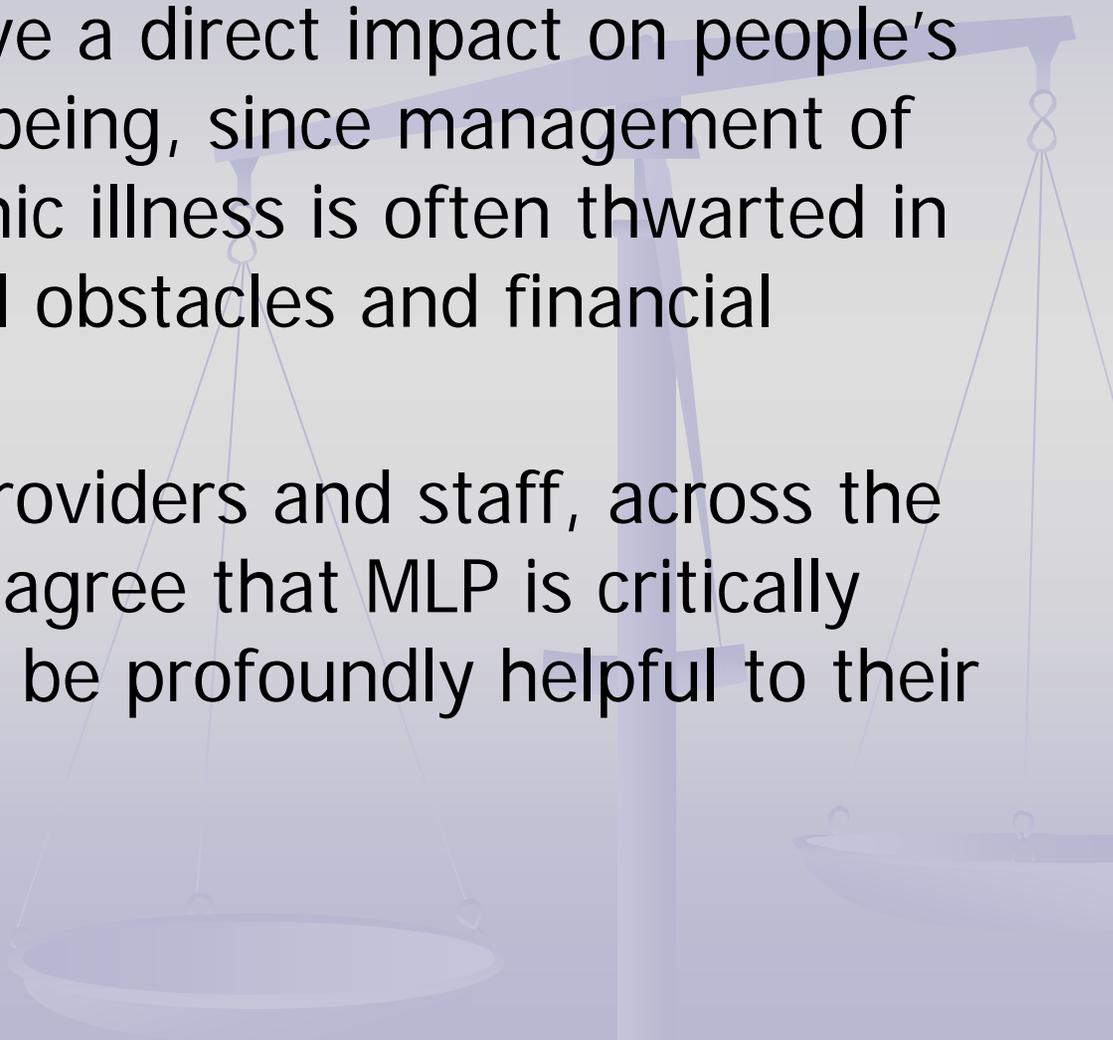
- Now available at over 180 hospitals and health centers across 38 states
- Address legal needs for low-income and vulnerable patients and thereby improve overall health
- It is estimated that anywhere between 50 and 85 percent of healthcare users (around 10 and 17 million) experience unmet legal needs.

Medical-Legal Partnerships

- Acknowledge the influence of social factors on health
- Recognize that some social factors are remediable by enforcement of existing laws and regulations
- Consider attorneys as “subspecialists” that can remedy some of the non-medical obstacles that affect child health

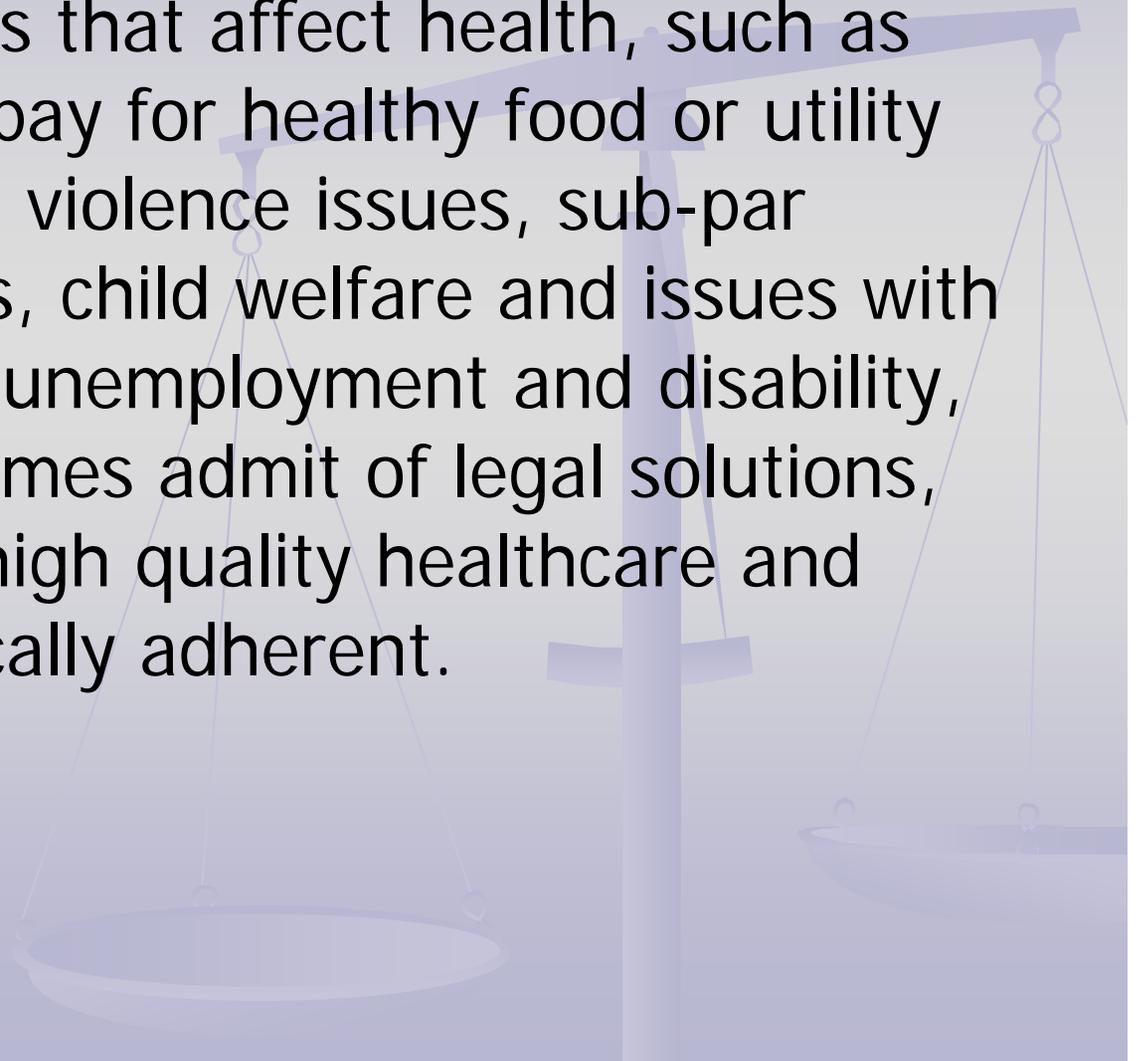


Key assessments from other MLPs

- Legal needs have a direct impact on people's health and wellbeing, since management of acute and chronic illness is often thwarted in the face of legal obstacles and financial burdens.
 - Health center providers and staff, across the board, strongly agree that MLP is critically needed and will be profoundly helpful to their patients.
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Key assessments from other MLPs

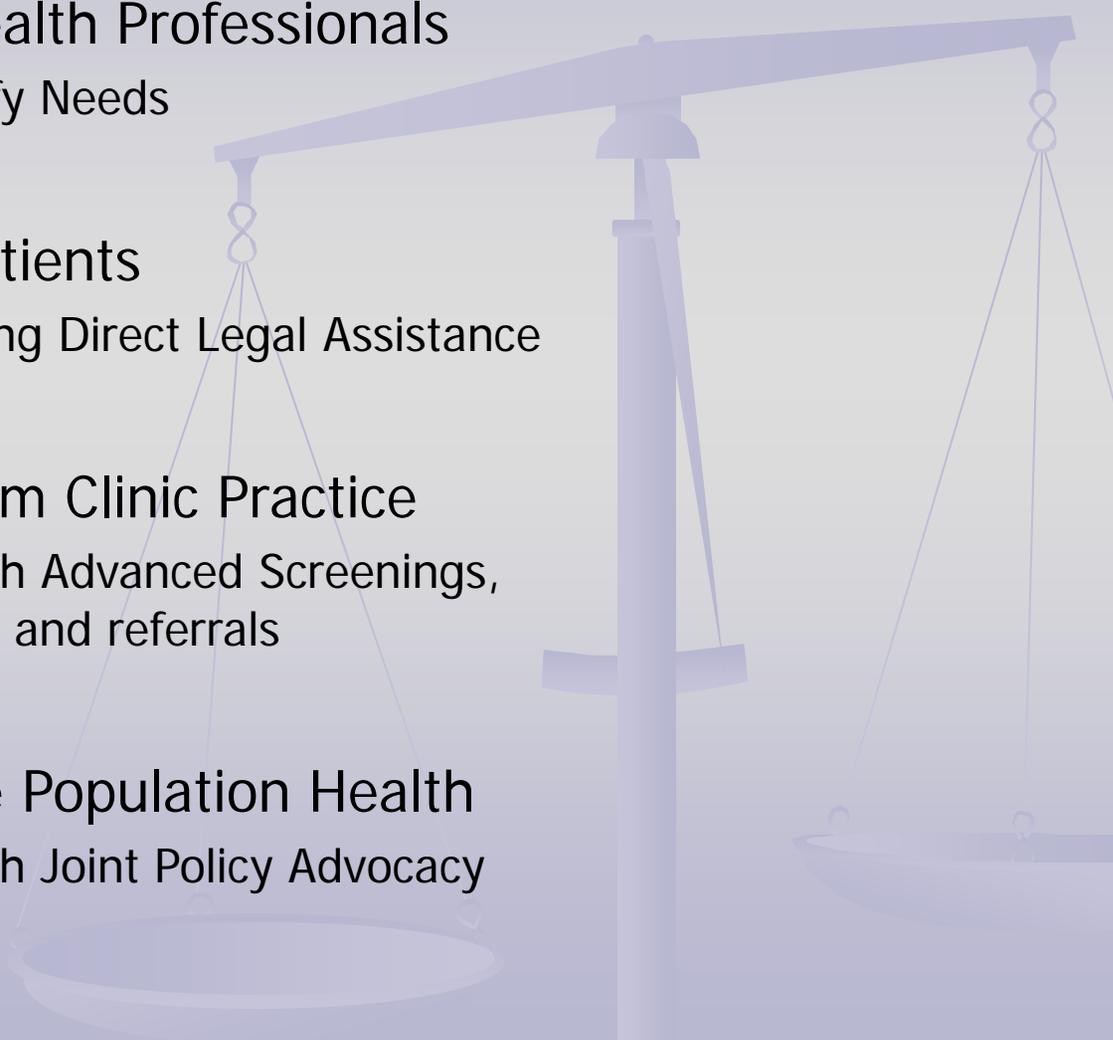
- Non-medical issues that affect health, such as not being able to pay for healthy food or utility bills, interpersonal violence issues, sub-par housing conditions, child welfare and issues with immigrant status, unemployment and disability, etc., which sometimes admit of legal solutions, often undermine high quality healthcare and ability to be medically adherent.



Socio-Legal Determinants of Health



The Medical-Legal Partnership Approach to Determinants of Health

1. Train Health Professionals
 - ✓ Identify Needs
 1. Treat Patients
 - ✓ Including Direct Legal Assistance
 1. Transform Clinic Practice
 - ✓ Through Advanced Screenings, toolkits and referrals
 1. Improve Population Health
 - ✓ Through Joint Policy Advocacy
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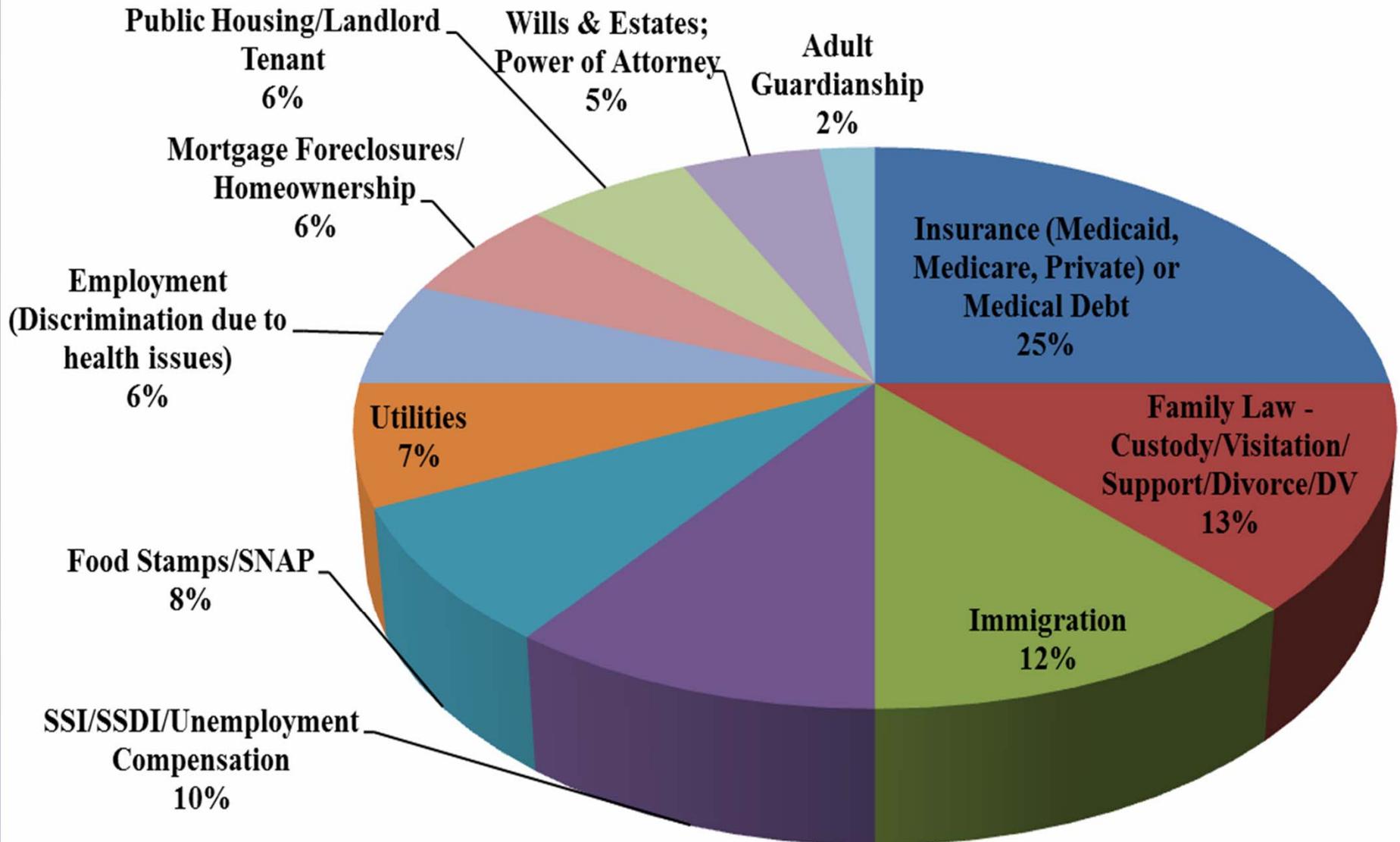
Burden of Poverty

- More than 1 in 4 school-aged children in Louisiana live in poverty
- Orleans Parish has the highest rate, with 38% of students in poverty
- Poor children have significantly higher risk of suffering health problems than do children from non-poor families

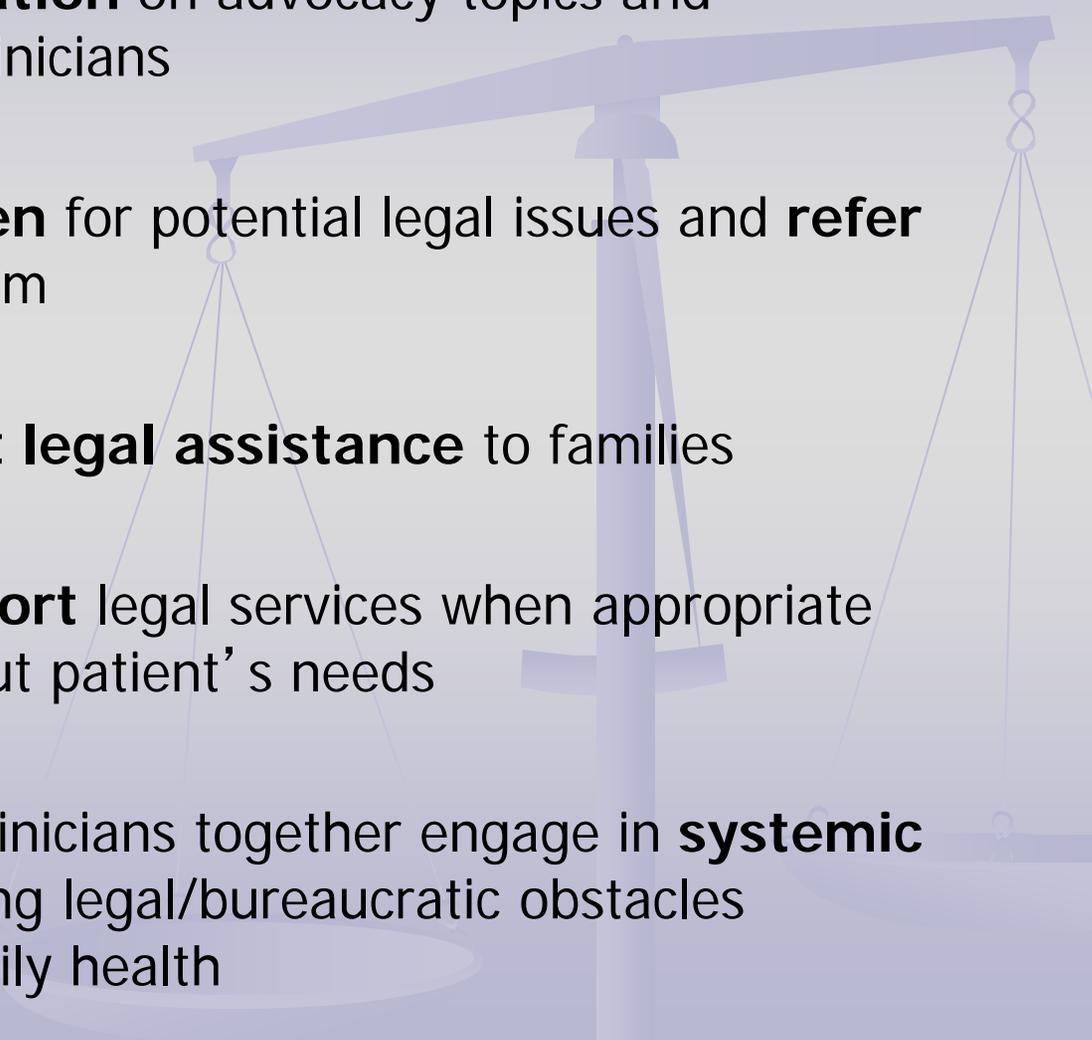


Legal Issues Referred to & Identified by MLCP

September 18, 2013 - March 4, 2014



Medical-Legal Partnership at Children's



- Lawyers provide **education** on advocacy topics and strategies to medical clinicians
- Medical clinicians **screen** for potential legal issues and **refer** families to the legal team
- Lawyers provide **direct legal assistance** to families
- Medical clinicians **support** legal services when appropriate by communicating about patient's needs
- Lawyers and medical clinicians together engage in **systemic advocacy** by addressing legal/bureaucratic obstacles adversely affecting family health

Medical-Legal Partnership at Children's

- Benefits cases

- SSI, Medicaid, Food Stamps, TANF

- Denials can be appealed

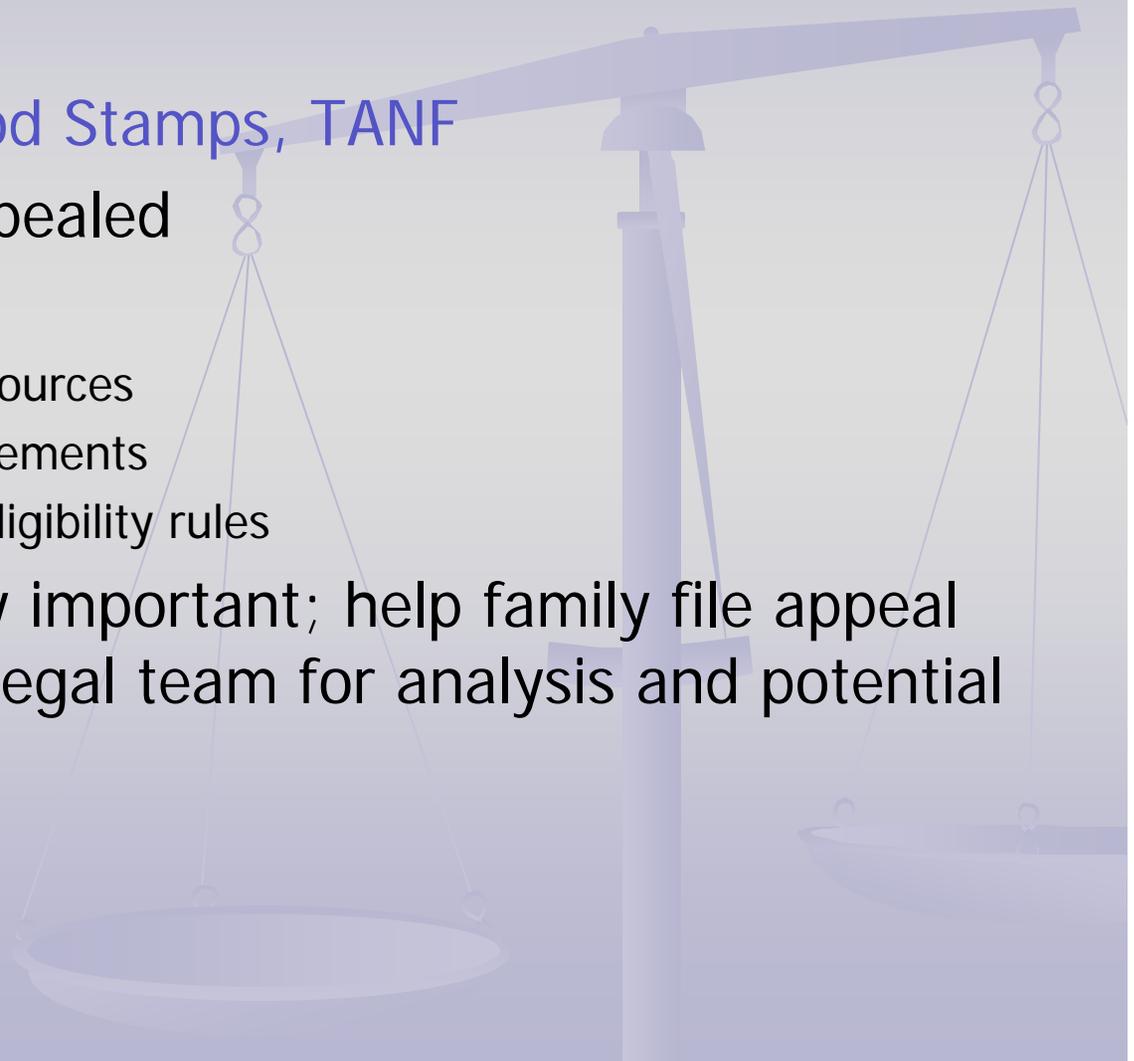
- Issues can involve

- Income and resources

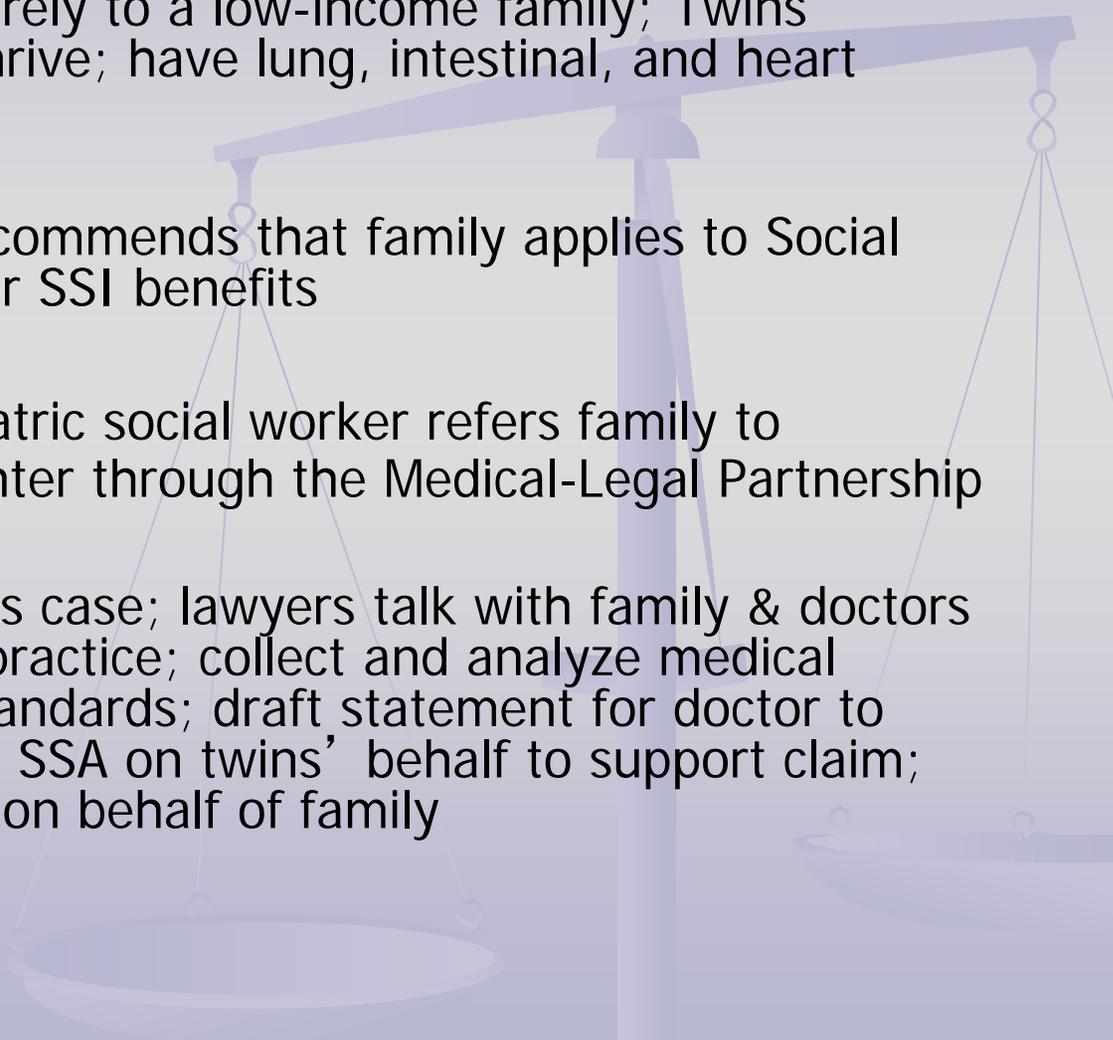
- Disability requirements

- Miscellaneous eligibility rules

- Deadlines are very important; help family file appeal and then refer to legal team for analysis and potential representation



Benefits Case Example



- Twins were born prematurely to a low-income family; Twins suffered from failure to thrive; have lung, intestinal, and heart problems
- Pediatric social worker recommends that family applies to Social Security Administration for SSI benefits
- Benefits are denied; pediatric social worker refers family to Louisiana Civil Justice Center through the Medical-Legal Partnership
- Family Law Center accepts case; lawyers talk with family & doctors at hospital and pediatric practice; collect and analyze medical records; research legal standards; draft statement for doctor to review to be submitted to SSA on twins' behalf to support claim; submits all forms to SSA on behalf of family

Benefits - Case Outcomes Summary

Outcome Category	FY 2012 Annualized	FY 2011 Annualized	FY 2010 Annualized	FY 2009 Annualized
Public Benefits	\$218,279	\$419,356	\$276,438	\$123,017
Consumer	\$2,735	\$39,848	\$3,989	\$258
Education Benefits	\$86,847	\$54,230	\$147,708	\$351,650
Employment Benefits		\$10,404		\$25,740
Family Stability	\$20,532	\$31,408	\$19,162	\$1,380
Healthcare Coverage	\$451,316	\$439,366	\$345,141	\$220,630
Housing	\$36,288	\$28,188	\$133,956	\$66,029
Public Policy Advocacy	\$60,000	\$180,000		
Other	\$50,500	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$27,351
Total	\$926,497	\$1,252,800	\$976,394	\$816,055

Medical-Legal Partnership: Impact on Asthma

- **Results**

- **295** parents/guardians with **313** children with asthma were referred to the HeLP for legal intervention.
 - **89.5%** were < 200% FPL
- **77/130 (59%)** patients were in the appropriate grade in school
- **62/130** reported missing a total of **1208** days of school due to their illness
 - **65/130** resulted in a measurable gain of benefits (\$501,209)
 - **Non-financial benefits** included access to education, family law (custody and visitation), estate planning (wills advanced directives).

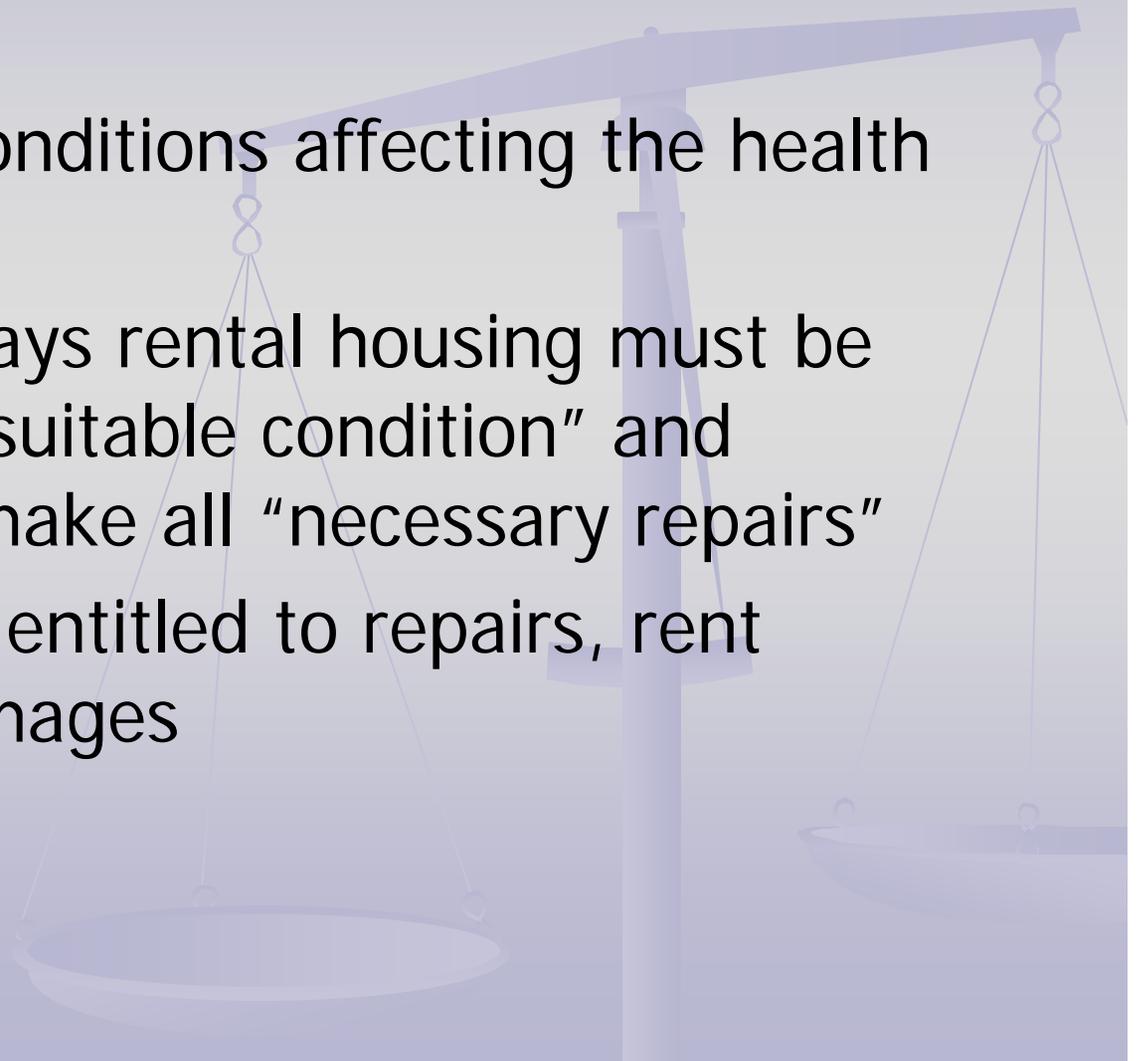
Pettignano R, Caley S, Bliss L. Can Access to a Medical-Legal Partnership Benefit Patients with Asthma Who Live in an Urban Community. *JHPU* May 2013



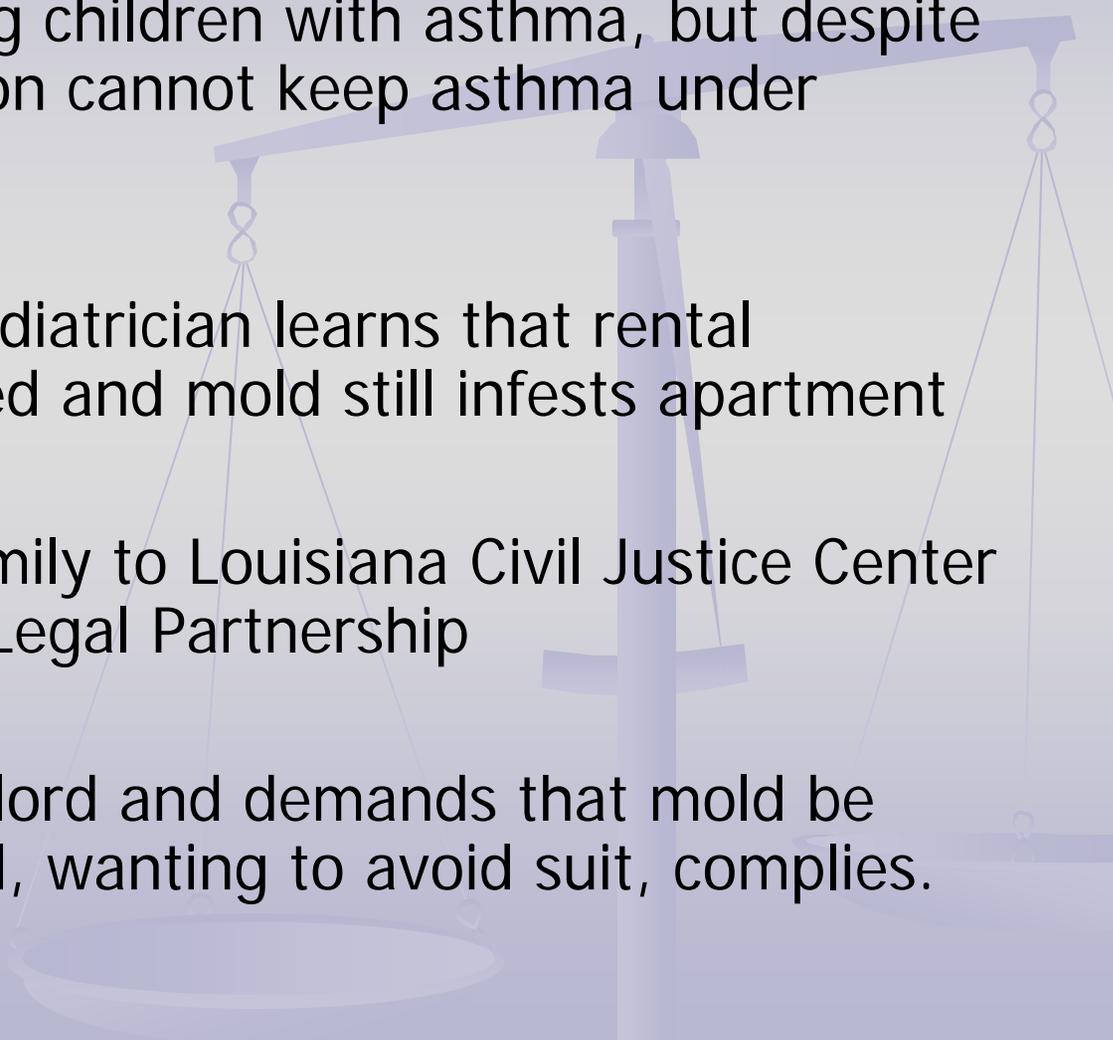
Medical-Legal Partnership at Children's

■ Housing cases

- Poor housing conditions affecting the health of a child
- Louisiana law says rental housing must be maintained in "suitable condition" and landlord must make all "necessary repairs"
- Tenant may be entitled to repairs, rent abatement, damages



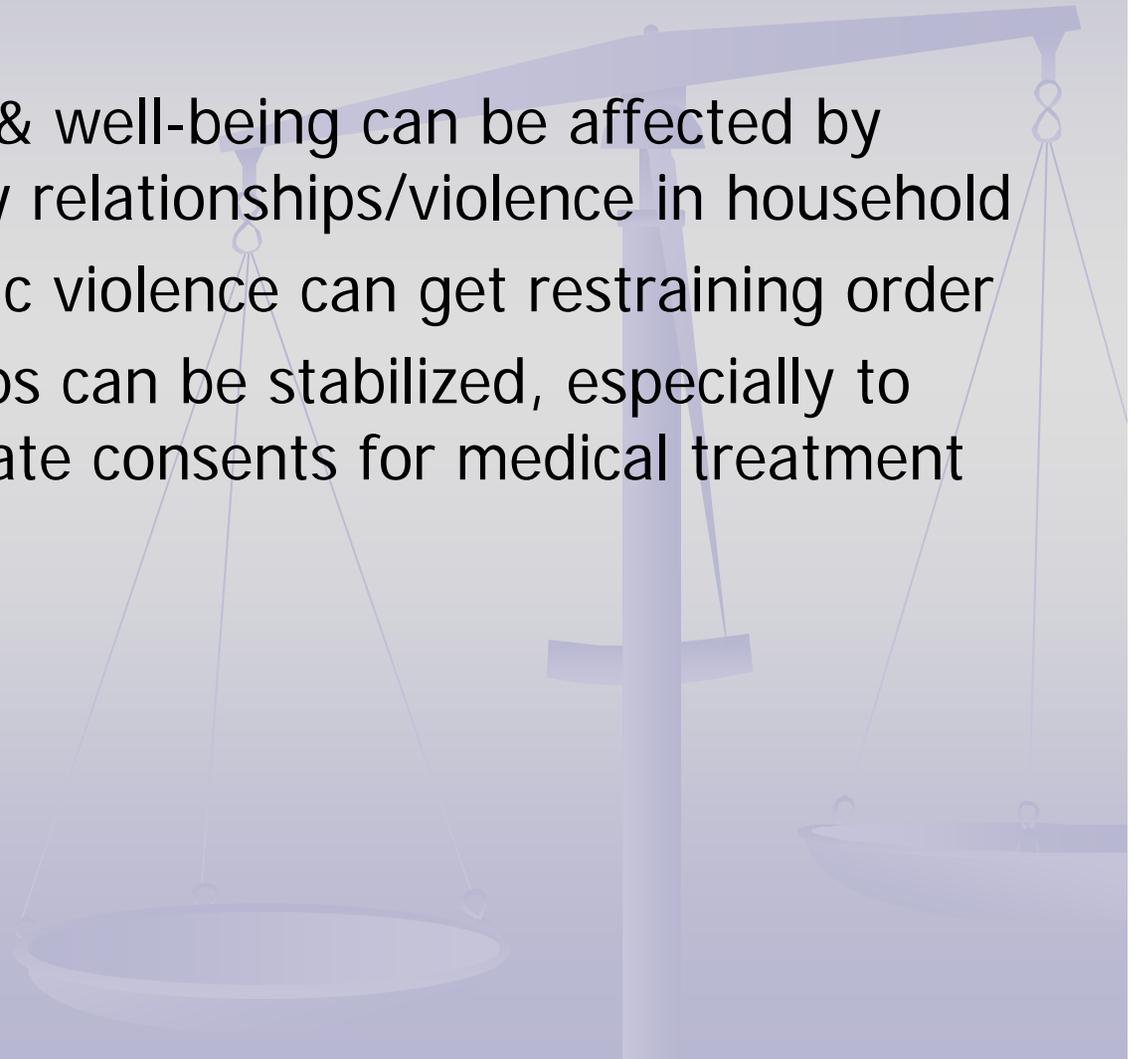
Housing Case example



- Pediatrician is treating children with asthma, but despite appropriate medication cannot keep asthma under control
- Upon questioning, pediatrician learns that rental apartment had flooded and mold still infests apartment
- Pediatrician refers family to Louisiana Civil Justice Center through the Medical-Legal Partnership
- Lawyer contacts landlord and demands that mold be cleaned up. Landlord, wanting to avoid suit, complies.

Medical-Legal Partnership at Children's

- Family law cases
 - Children's health & well-being can be affected by instability in family relationships/violence in household
 - Victims of domestic violence can get restraining order
 - Family relationships can be stabilized, especially to allow for appropriate consents for medical treatment for children

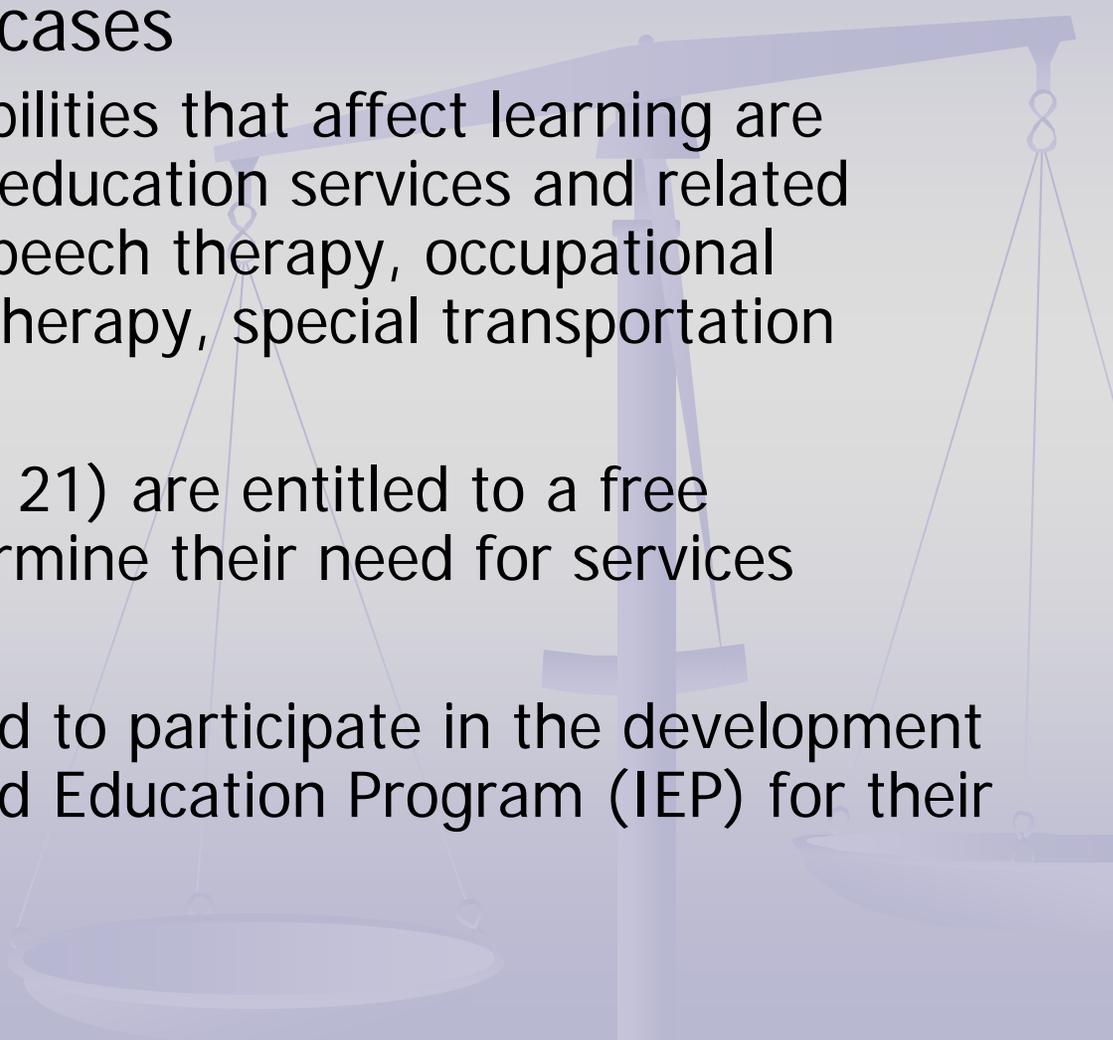


Family Law Case Example

- Grandmother brings child with cerebral palsy to pediatrician for care, revealing that the child's mother is abusing drugs and is not taking care of child. Grandmother is unable to enroll child in school.
- Pediatrician refers family to Louisiana Civil Justice Center through the Medical-Legal Partnership
- Lawyer prepares necessary paperwork that allows child to be enrolled in school despite not living with his parent & then seeks custody for the grandmother to stabilize the child's care.

Medical-Legal Partnership at Children's

■ Special Education cases

- Children with disabilities that affect learning are entitled to special education services and related services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, special transportation
 - Children (ages 3 – 21) are entitled to a free evaluation to determine their need for services
 - Parents are entitled to participate in the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for their children
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Special Education Case Example

- Pediatric psychologist working with a child with emotional issues learns that the child is struggling in school and is at risk of failing. Parent says she has been unable to get the school personnel to help.
- Psychologist refers family to Louisiana Civil Justice Center through the Medical-Legal Partnership
- Lawyer reviews school records then accompanies parent to meeting at which a new IEP is developed to address the child's needs. Lawyer relies on information from psychologist to build the case for services for the child.

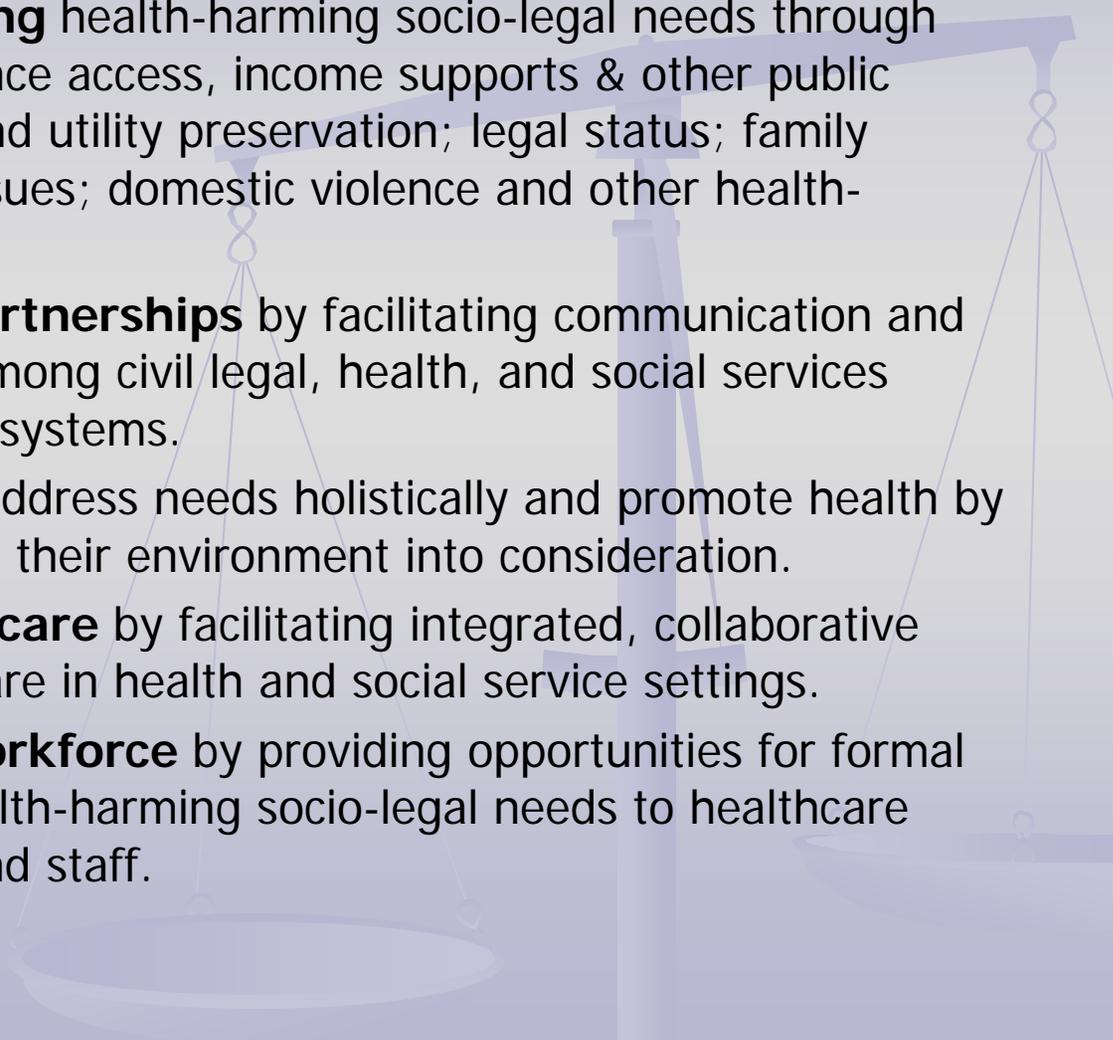
Medical-Legal Partnership at Children's: How it Works

- As clinician identifies a family with a potential legal problem, clinician offers family opportunity for free legal consultation
- If family is interested, clinicians refer to legal team
 - Clinician fills out a referral form and emails it to The Louisiana Civil Justice Center OR
 - Clinician refers patient to call Louisiana Civil Justice Center directly
- Law office contacts family and sets up interview
- Lawyer and referring clinician work collaboratively when needed to achieve goals
- LCJC Website: www.laciviljustice.org

Priorities of Family Legal Center

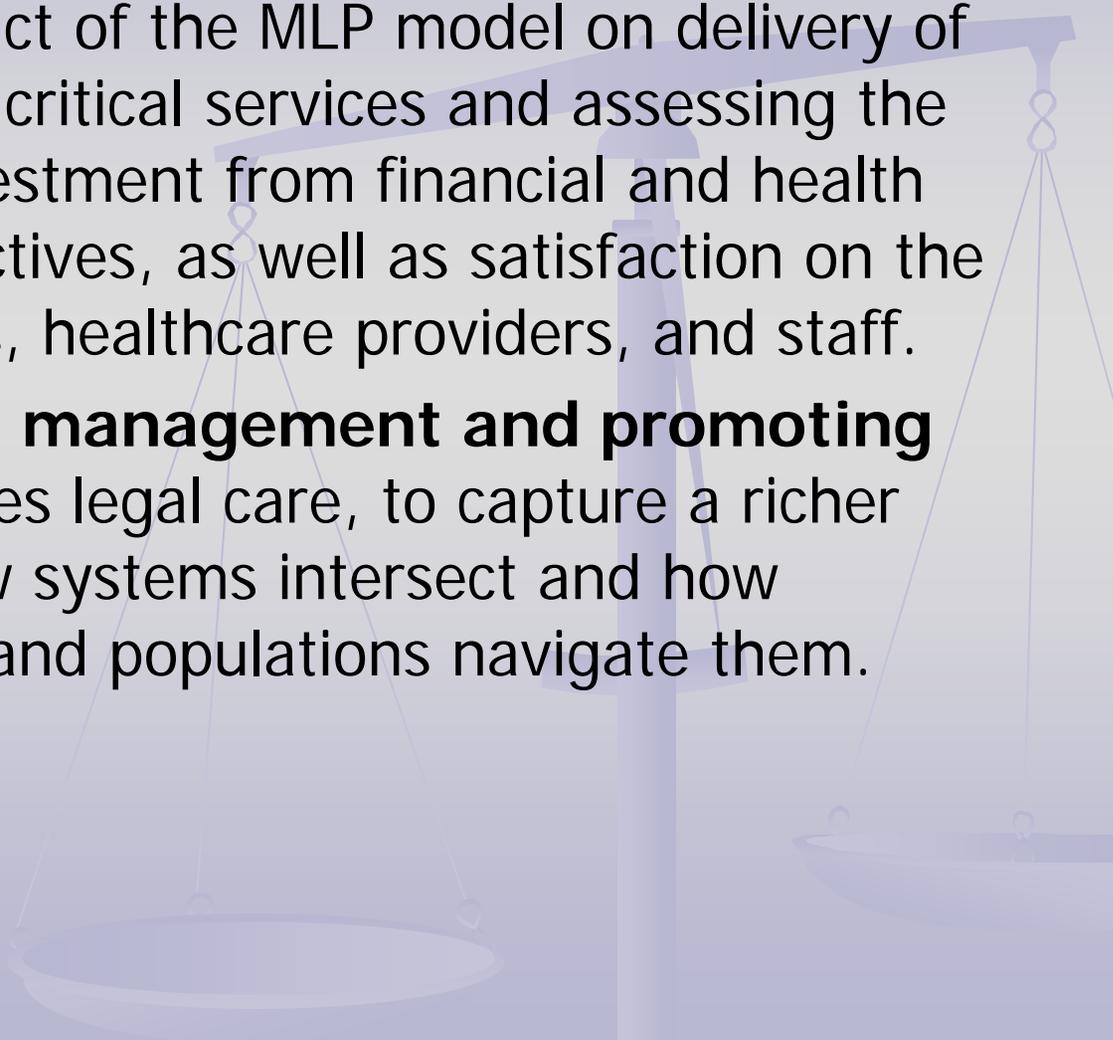
- **Monitoring health** through a socio-legal lens and creating a feedback loop between healthcare and legal staff as to the patient/client's socio-legal situation, in relation to improvements in health and wellbeing.
- **Informing, educating, & empowering** MLCP patient/clients, healthcare providers and staff, as well as surrounding communities about their rights as citizens and the availability of medical-legal services to promote health and well-being.

Priorities of Family Legal Center



- **Diagnosing & investigating** health-harming socio-legal needs through screening for: health insurance access, income supports & other public benefits; housing security and utility preservation; legal status; family stability and child welfare issues; domestic violence and other health-harming socio- legal issues.
- **Mobilizing community partnerships** by facilitating communication and encouraging collaboration among civil legal, health, and social services organizations, agencies and systems.
- **Developing policies** that address needs holistically and promote health by taking the whole person and their environment into consideration.
- **Linking to and providing care** by facilitating integrated, collaborative services that include legal care in health and social service settings.
- **Assuring a competent workforce** by providing opportunities for formal and informal training on health-harming socio-legal needs to healthcare administrators, providers, and staff.

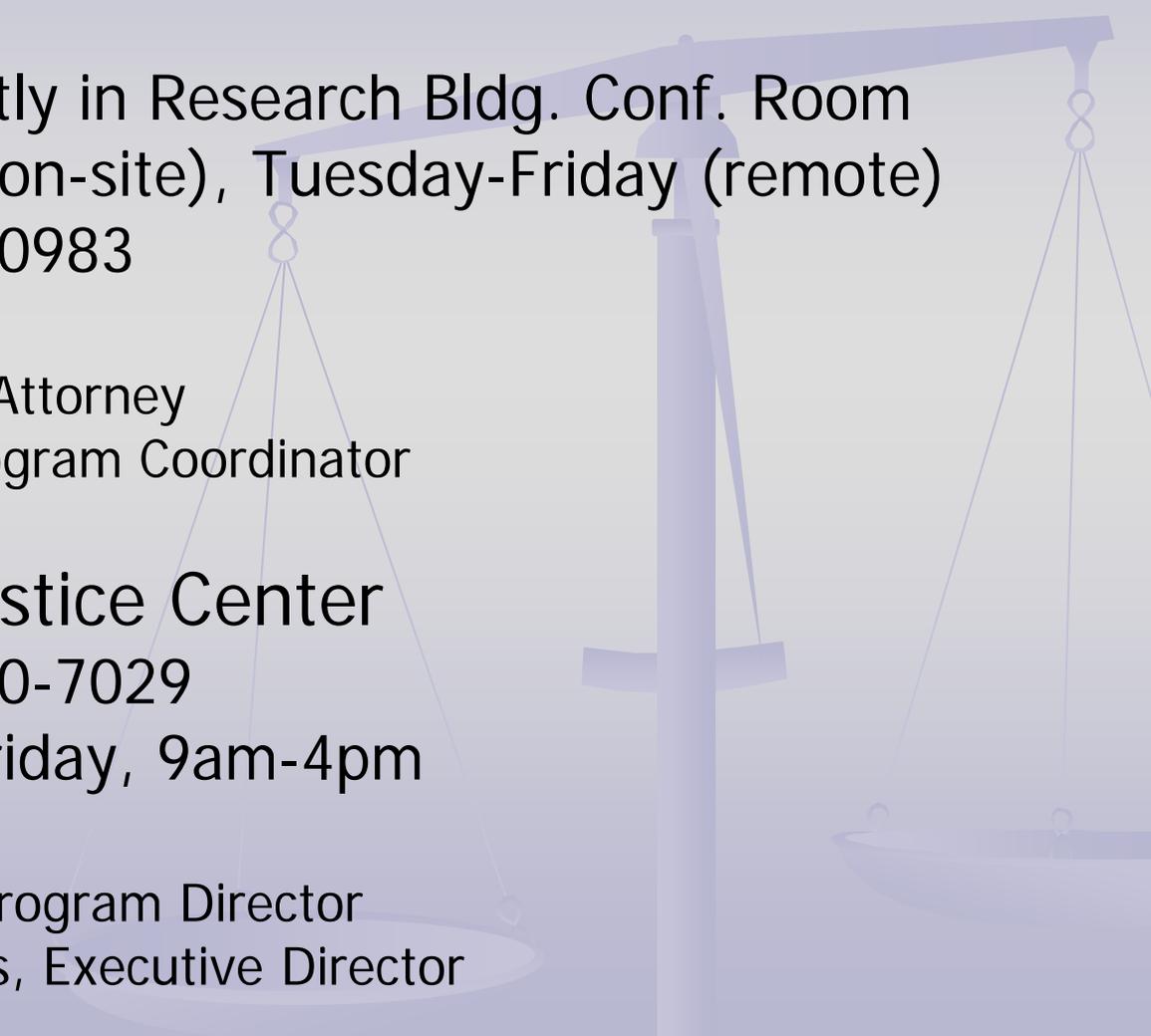
Priorities of Family Legal Center

- **Evaluating** the impact of the MLP model on delivery of healthcare and other critical services and assessing the MLCP's return on investment from financial and health improvement perspectives, as well as satisfaction on the part of patient/clients, healthcare providers, and staff.
 - **Facilitating system management and promoting research** that includes legal care, to capture a richer understanding of how systems intersect and how individuals, families, and populations navigate them.
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Outcomes and Evaluation Tools

Process Measures	Legal Services Measures	Intermediate Health Measures
<i>Client was appropriately screened for legal needs</i>	Client's legal issue resolved/unresolved	Client increased access to health services
<i>Legal needs were appropriately identified</i>	Client obtained or maintained household income	Client reduced Emergency Room use
<i>Appropriate referral was provided</i>	Client received retroactive benefits	Increase in number of clients with regular provider
<i>Client obtained legal help</i>	Client completed/received legal documentation	Client reduced overnight hospital stay
<i>Client increased understanding of legal rights</i>	Client increased access to services	Client perceived stress reduced
<i>Client was connected with another resource</i>		Client self-report health status
<i>Client was satisfied with services</i>		Client self-efficacy
<i>Residents or Providers received legal training</i>		
<i>Residents or Providers increased their legal knowledge/understanding</i>		
<i>Residents or Providers increased confidence in working with legal services</i>		

Contact information



- The Family Law Center at Children's Hospital
 - Location: Currently in Research Bldg. Conf. Room
 - Days: Mondays (on-site), Tuesday-Friday (remote)
 - Phone: 504-355-0983
 - Staff:
 - James Graham, Attorney
 - Jesse Rafert, Program Coordinator

- Louisiana Civil Justice Center
 - Phone: 1-800-310-7029
 - Days: Monday-Friday, 9am-4pm
 - Staff:
 - Amelia Hoppe, Program Director
 - Jonathan Rhodes, Executive Director