The Reality

Good health requires more than good health care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The U.S. spends more money on health care than any industrialized country, but it ranks</th>
<th>The U.S. spends $0.90 on social services for every $1 it spends on health care.</th>
<th>That’s a problem when only 40% of health is determined by genetics and health care, while the rest depends on environmental and social factors.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42nd</td>
<td>169th</td>
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<td>in life expectancy</td>
<td>in low birth weight</td>
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As an example, at 42 years-old, Robert Jackson was spending almost as much time in the hospital as he was spending at home. He was admitted to Lancaster General Hospital three times in just seven months because of problems with his lungs and kidneys. Each time he went, bills piled up from procedures and medications he didn’t have insurance to cover. Depressed from the mounting debt, Mr. Jackson stopped taking some of his pills, and his health only got worse.

The Response

Integrating civil legal aid as part of quality health care

Medical-legal partnership embeds lawyers alongside health care teams to improve both individual and population health. Research shows that when patients’ legal problems -- such as threatened evictions, wrongful utility shut-offs, insurance disputes, and improper educational supports for children -- are solved:

- People with chronic illnesses are admitted to the hospital less frequently.
- People more commonly take their medications as prescribed.
- People report less stress.
- Less money is spent on health care services for the people who would otherwise frequently go to the hospital.
- Clinical services are more frequently reimbursed by public and private payers.

Fortunately for Mr. Jackson, Lancaster General has a medical-legal partnership (MLP). Relying on important medical information provided by his clinicians, one of the MLP’s lawyers appealed his insurance denial, and helped get some of his medical debt covered retroactively. She also discovered that Mr. Jackson’s social security benefits had been unlawfully garnished, and helped reinstate 95 percent of his original benefit. This meant Mr. Jackson had more money not only for health care, but also for food and housing. With better health insurance and more money, Mr. Jackson’s depression lessened, and he moved his family into better housing. He started taking his pills regularly, and he lost over 150 pounds. His health improved so much that he has not been back to the hospital since.
The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership

WHAT WE DO

Data from the field and hundreds of stories like Mr. Jackson’s show great potential for medical-legal partnership to dramatically improve individual and population health as well as the health care system. To expedite this growth and reach more communities, health care, public health, and civil legal aid sectors need common metrics, implementation resources, and increased funding opportunities. The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership is the engine leading those sectors, and driving the development of those metrics, resources, and funding opportunities. Our work is described in the four areas below.

THE FIELD

Medical-legal partnerships across the country improve the health and well-being of children, chronically ill adults, the elderly, Native Americans, and veterans. In 2016, MLPs operate in:

- 294 health centers, hospitals, and community clinics
- 126 civil legal aid agencies
- 86 law, medical, nursing, public health, and social work schools
- 64 pro bono partners
- 41 states

IMPACT

Medical-legal partnerships improve health and reduce stress, and reduce hospital re-admissions and health care costs. Read the research at: www.medical-legalpartnership.org/impact

ANNUAL SUMMIT & ONLINE RESOURCES

Each spring, the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership hosts an accredited national conference that brings together hundreds of leaders in government, law, medicine, nursing, public health, and social work to share ideas, insights and best practices about how integrating civil legal aid into health care can help combat health-harming social conditions.

We also host several free webinars and virtual office hours each month to train the MLP field, and offer an MLP Toolkit and dozens of resources on our website to help inform, grow, and sustain partnerships.

CONNECT WITH US

- www.medical-legalpartnership.org
- National_MLP
- NCMLP