



A Division of the New York Legal Assistance Group

LegalHealth[®]

Professional Partnership to Promote Well Being

Since 2001, LegalHealth has partnered with medical professionals to address the nonmedical needs of low-income people with serious health problems. LegalHealth complements health care with legal care — providing free legal services in medical facilities and training healthcare professionals to understand the legal issues their patients face.

Client Services

Every week attorneys bring the law office into the hospital, providing advice and representation to help patients:

- Secure government benefits
- Fix housing problems
- Address credit issues
- Handle immigration matters
- Access special education services
- Plan ahead (e.g., will, healthcare proxy, power of attorney and guardianship)
- Solve insurance disputes
- Negotiate workplace accommodations.

One Patient's Story

Monica, a 45-year-old single mother of an 11-year-old girl, was diagnosed with terminal cancer and soon grew too weak to continue working as a cashier. She felt overwhelmed by debt, worried about how she would pay her rent and quite alone, as she had no family in the US. Monica had no will, healthcare proxy or power of attorney. The stress of dealing with all these issues further compromised her health. Referred to LegalHealth by her hospital social worker, Monica got help applying for disability benefits, making plans for the care and custody of her daughter, drafting end-of-life documents and resolving her debt/credit issues. Monica now has better quality of life and the comfort of knowing her daughter will be well cared for.

Physician Comments on LegalHealth Collaboration

Before LegalHealth came to Mount Sinai Medical Center, Dr. Sania Perez “felt stymied” about helping her clinic patients address their nonmedical conditions. Now, she says, “I feel like I have more options to present to my patients and am more effective in my job. Now I can say, ‘Let’s see what we can do.’”

“If I can improve their housing conditions, I am treating their asthma,” says Dr. Peter Tesler of St. Luke’s Hospital. The program “has broadened my horizons to these issues where I can help my patients nonmedically.”

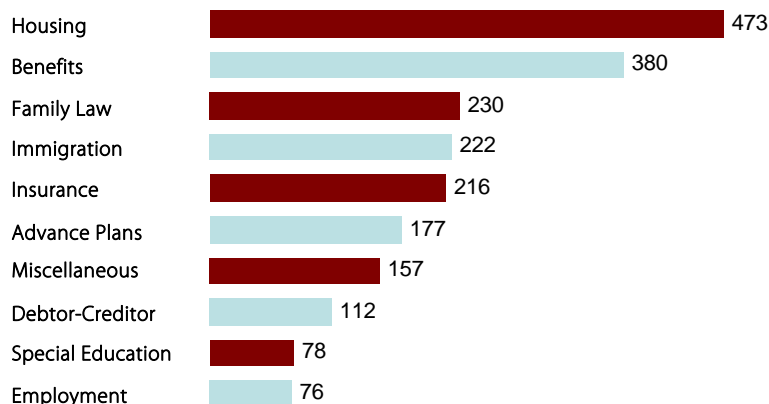
Provider Services

Attorneys deliver onsite training to help healthcare providers understand their role in addressing patients’ nonmedical needs. Training includes:

- Bringing Advocacy to Your Practice
- Forms 101: Completing the Forms Your Patients Bring You
- Improving Your Patients’ Housing
- Understanding Your Patients’ Immigration Concerns
- Decision Making in Health and Legal Matters: A Guide for Physicians
- Minors’ Right to Consent to Care
- Advocating for the Child With Special Education Needs
- Your Patient in the Workplace.

LegalHealth attorneys are also available for consultation as issues arise.

In 2005 LegalHealth attorneys served more than 2,000 clients, referred by physicians, social workers and community-based organizations. Housing and benefits led the list of issues that brought these patients to LegalHealth.



Partnerships With Hospitals

- Bellevue Hospital
- Beth Israel Hospital
- Elmhurst Hospital
- Kings County Hospital
- Lincoln Hospital
- Maimonides Medical Center
- Mount Sinai Hospital
- Queens Hospital – Cancer Center
- Ralph Lauren Center for Cancer Care & Prevention
- South Bronx Health Center for Children & Families
- St. Luke’s Hospital

Partnerships With Community-Based Organizations

LegalHealth partners with these organizations that provide psychosocial support, counseling and financial aid, but not legal assistance. LegalHealth fills this gap with legal services to clients and staff training.

- American Cancer Society
- CancerCare
- Chai Lifeline
- Continuum Hospice Care
- Friends of Karen
- Gilda’s Club
- Hemophilia Association of New York
- Lupus Foundation of America
- Multiple Sclerosis Society
- SHARE

Funding Sources

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