

LegalHealth®

A Project of the New York Legal Assistance Group



Mission of LegalHealth

LegalHealth brings together legal and medical professionals to improve the lives of low-income children and adults with serious health concerns – where and when they need it most. Because medical and legal needs are often intertwined LegalHealth provides free legal services to patients within the medical setting and educates healthcare professionals to better address their patients' needs. By creating this partnership, LegalHealth adds a new dimension to healthcare: legal care.

LegalHealth fulfills its mission by building upon the trust already established between a healthcare professional and a patient. By working within an existing bond LegalHealth attorneys are able to help physicians and other healthcare professionals gain an understanding of the non-medical needs of their patients, and work to resolve their legal issues that negatively affect their health and quality of life. As a result of this collaborative approach, patients receive medical and non-medical services in a comprehensive package.

Project Model

LegalHealth delivers services to a growing number of New York City hospitals and community organizations. These services include individual case consultations, counseling and direct representation.

Hospital Based Clinics:

LegalHealth offers weekly legal clinics during which staff attorneys conduct intake of patients referred by physicians, social workers or other medical professionals. Additionally, LegalHealth provides training sessions to medical providers and social workers and serves as a continuous resource to them as issues arise.

Community Based Services:

LegalHealth conducts monthly legal clinics at partnering community-based health advocacy organizations, and, where physical limitations prevent a person from traveling, LegalHealth attorneys are available for home visits or telephonic in-take. LegalHealth attorneys also provide training and legal consultation to the staff of the community organizations.

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LEGAL ASSISTANCE GROUP

www.legalhealth.org

Participating Relationships

Hospital Based Clinics

- Bellevue Hospital Center
- Beth Israel Medical Center
Pediatric Department
Cancer Center
ALS Clinic
- Elmhurst Hospital
- Kings County Hospital
- Lincoln Medical Center
- Maimonides Medical Center
Pediatric Department
Hematology/
Oncology
- Mount Sinai Hospital
Pediatric Associates
Hematology/
Oncology
Internal Medicine
- Queens Cancer Center of
Queens Hospital
- Ralph Lauren Center for
Cancer Care and
Prevention
- South Bronx Health Center
for Children and
Families
- St. Luke's-Roosevelt
Pediatric Ambulatory
Clinic

Community Organizations

- American Cancer Society
- Cancer Care
- Chai Lifeline
- Friends of Karen
- Gilda's Club
- Hemophilia Association
- Continuum Hospice
- Lupus Foundation
- MS Society
- SHARE

Legal Areas Handled

LegalHealth receives referrals in various areas including: government benefits, housing conditions, special education, disability benefits, insurance coverage, immigration, end of life planning, debt management, accessible housing, home care services and employment matters, including discrimination.

Training Curriculum

LegalHealth offers extensive training, including:

- Overview of LegalHealth: Bringing Advocacy To Your Practice
- How To Maximize Resources For Your Patient
- Immigration And How it Relates To Coverage For Medical Care
- Introduction To Social Security Disability Benefits For Adults
- Introduction To Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Benefits For Children
- Health And Legal Decision Making – A Guide For Physicians
- Helping Your Patient Obtain Better Housing
- Minors' Right To Consent To Care
- Advocating For The Child With Special Education Needs
- Introduction To Private Insurance Disputes
- Your Patient And The Workplace

Funding Sources

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LegalHealth Staffing

LegalHealth's staff consists of eight attorneys and one paralegal. Additionally, LegalHealth benefits from attorney and non-attorney volunteers.

Changing Lives: True Story

Ms. A., a 45-year old single mother of an 11-year old girl, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Ms. A. had been working as a cashier, but was too weak to continue on the job. She was overwhelmed by debt and unsure how she would pay her rent. She had no will, health care proxy or power of attorney. Ms. A. had no family members in the U.S.; The father of her child had no interest in raising his daughter. The stress of dealing with these issues further compromised Ms. A.'s health. She was referred to LegalHealth by her hospital social worker and LegalHealth attorneys were able to assist her apply for disability benefits, make plans for the future care and custody of her daughter, draft end of life documents and resolve her debtor/creditor issues. Ms. A. now has an improved quality of life and the comfort of knowing who will care for her daughter.