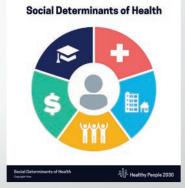
The Importance of Legal Representation for Healthy Patients: Medical-Legal Partnerships in Support of Community Health

Presented at the UTCLE Health Law Conference on Friday, April 8, 2022

Social Determinants of Health

"Conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks."



Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved [date graphic was accessed], from https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health





³Emilia De Marchis et al, *Physician Burnout and Higher Clinic Capacity to Address Patients' Social Needs*, 32 J. AM. BOARD FAM. MED. 69 (2019), *available at* <u>https://doi.org/10.3122/jabfm.2019.01.180104</u>. ²Edward Paul et al, The Medical-Legal Partnership Approach to Teaching Social Determinants of Health and Structural Competency in Residency Programs, 92 Acad. Med. 392 (2017). ¹NATOWAC ENTRE FOR MEDICA-LEGAL PARTNERSHIP FILE (Aug. 2017), <u>https://medical-legalartnership.org/upcontent/upclads/2017/07/2016-MI2P-Survey-Report.pdf</u>.

Legal Services Inequities Predict Health Disparities

- Research shows that civil legal aid is positively correlated with health by
 - being available in adequate supply;
 - mitigating poverty and injustice;
 - remediating acute crises; and
 - achieving broader policy gains focused on equity.

James Tuefel et al, Legal Aid Inequities Predict Health Disparities, 38 HAMLINE L. REV. 329 (2015), available at http://digitalcommons.hamline.edu/hlr/vol38/iss2/7.



was forced to work in violation of fair labor standards, and had many family law problems.

Identify Legal Needs to Address Root Causes

Appeal denials of food stamps, health insurance eligibility or coverage, cash assistance, & disability benefits	 Increasing someone's income means fewer trade-offs between affording food and health care, including medications. Being able to afford enough healthy food helps adults manage chronic diseases and helps children grow and develop. 	Resources to meet basic needs
Secure housing subsidies Improve substandard conditions Prevent evictions Protect against utility shut-off	 A stable, decent, affordable home helps a person avoid costly emergency room visits related to homelessness. Consistent housing, heat, and electricity helps people follow their medical treatment plans. 	A healthy physical environment
Secure specialized education services Prevent & remedy employment discrimination Enforce workplace rights	 A quality education is the greatest predictor of a person's adult health. Consistent employment helps provide money for food and safe housing, which also helps avoid costly emergency health care services. Access to health insurance is often linked to employment. 	Quality educational and work opportunities
Resolve veteran discharge status Clear criminal / credit histories Resolve legal name / gender marker inconsistencies Obtain immigration relief	 Clearing a person's criminal history or helping a veteran change their discharge status helps make consistent employment and access to public benefits possible. Consistent name and gender marker identification reduces discrimination and likelihood of physical assault and increases access to care. 	Access to opportunity and stability
Secure adoption and custody for children	 Less violence at home means less need for costly emergency health care services. Stable family relationships significantly reduce stress and allow for better decision-making, including decisions related to health care. 	Safe homes and social support

Adapted from Nat'l Ctr. for Med.Leg. P'ship, "How Legal Services Help the Healthcare System Address Social Needs," https://medical-legalpartnership.org/response/i-help/.

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