

## It's simple. Many people need legal care to be healthy.

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### MLP SUCCESS STORY

"Tammy" is eight years old and diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. She struggled in school, and had an insufficient and outdated Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Things got so bad Tammy simply stopped attending school. Despite the IEP, the school was reluctant to order new testing and delayed for so long that Tammy's mother didn't know what to do. Tammy's developmental and behavioral pediatrician referred the family to MLP | Boston, but by the time the case reached MLP, Tammy had been out of school for two months. MLP secured *pro bono* representation for Tammy, who was able to get Tammy placed in a new school where her needs are respected and she is succeeding. The volunteer attorney also was able to secure improvements to Tammy's IEP, and is currently working on getting Tammy an iPad through the school's assistive technology program. Many thanks to *pro bono* attorney **Lucas Silva** and the [Foley & Lardner](#) team for improving Tammy's health through justice!

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### A TIMELY TIP FOR CLINICAL PARTNERS



#### Governor Patrick Announces Steps to Preserve SNAP Benefits & Fuel Assistance Deadline Extended to May 15

The "H-EAT" program has been preserved by the Patrick administration as of March 18, to assure that eligible SNAP recipients receive increased benefits based on their enrollment in the state's fuel assistance program. While the DTA commits to automatically identifying and enrolling eligible families, this does not happen in every case. So it's especially important for families whose SNAP benefits have been reduced recently to make sure they didn't fall through the cracks by calling the DTA at 1-800-249-2007 or their DTA case worker, or DHCD at 1-800-632-8175 to inquire. For more information visit: [www.massresources.org/heat-eat.html](http://www.massresources.org/heat-eat.html) and [www.mass.gov/governor/pressoffice/pressreleases/2014/0318-governor-announces-steps-to-preserve-snap-benefits.html](http://www.mass.gov/governor/pressoffice/pressreleases/2014/0318-governor-announces-steps-to-preserve-snap-benefits.html).

Additionally, **patients still can apply for fuel assistance. The deadline to apply has been extended to May 15.**

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### MLP IN THE NEWS

On January 13, 2014, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation *Commission to Build a Healthier America* released new recommendations on how best to improve the health of all Americans. The Commission cited medical-legal partnership as a "promising approach" and [featured MLP | Boston in a video](#) broadcast during a live on-line Recommendations Release Event. More information about the Commission Recommendations (entitled *Time to Act: Investing in the Health of our Children and Communities*) can be found [here](#).



Also in January, Samantha Morton shared her thoughts on leadership in the Boston Bar Association *Tipping the Scales* blog: "[Inviting All Ideas Is Essential -- But Every Group Needs a Structure.](#)"

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### MLP ON THE MOVE

ARKANSAS, January 15-16: Representatives from MLP | Boston and [Boston Children's Hospital](#) joined five other MLP programs at the inaugural *Better Team for Child Health* learning network meeting in Bentonville. Participants are examining best practices for addressing socio-legal drivers of poor health among vulnerable pediatric populations. The learning network

is convened by the Advisory Board Company, the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership (a program of the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services) and Walmart.

SEATTLE, April 10-11: We were delighted to present on a range of subjects at the annual MLP Summit, hosted by the [National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership](#) and themed *MLP in the Era of Health Reform*. MLP | Boston co-presented with colleagues from [Boston Medical Center's Department of Family Medicine, Department of Pediatrics](#) and [Women's Health Research Unit](#) on:

- MLP and Avoidable Readmissions: An Analytic Instrument to Assess Patient Readmission Antecedents
- Development of a Screening Tool to Identify Housing-related Barriers to Care Among Low-Income Women
- Socio-legal Services for Underserved Populations Through Patient Navigation to Optimize Resources During Cancer Treatment
- How MLPs Fit with Other Social Determinants of Health Interventions in the Healthcare Setting



L to R: Ambili Ramachandran, MD, BMC Women's Health Unit  
Samantha Morton, JD, MLP | Boston  
Michael Esang, MBBCh, MPH, BMC Dept. of Family Medicine  
Tracy Battaglia, MD, MPH, BMC Women's Health Unit

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## PROJECT UPDATES

- **Healthcare Workforce Transformation Planning Grant:** We are thrilled to be partnered with [Metro North Regional Employment Board](#), [Cambridge Health Alliance](#), [Hallmark Health System](#) and several other collaborators in exploring the training needs of community health workers in the evolving healthcare delivery landscape. [Read the press release here.](#)
- **BMC Pediatrics:** Effective April 1, our new colleague Deborah Durant is leading MLP service integration within BMC Pediatrics. We are delighted to be serving patients treated by MLP | Boston's founding department! [Read Deborah's bio here.](#)

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## SPRING APPEAL

MLP | Boston's Annual Spring Appeal is underway! We only conduct a formal appeal once each year, so please consider us when making your charitable contribution now.

[DONATE](#)

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*MLP | Boston's mission is to anticipate, prevent, and address social determinants of health affecting vulnerable people through legal strategies. Informed by public health knowledge and interdisciplinary approaches, we tackle patients' health-harming legal risks and problems. Our services measurably improve the health and well-being of patients and reduce the incidence of health disparities. Information contained in this newsletter is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or establish an attorney-client relationship.*

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