

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

PRO BONO Rx FOR A CHILD WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

Eight-year-old "Ashley" is being raised by single mom "Joan" and has behavioral and developmental challenges that make learning difficult. Ashley has had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) since she was 4 years old.

Last year, Ashley's school made changes to her IEP that reduced the amount of specialized support she received for reading. Joan thought these changes would be harmful to Ashley, and tried to negotiate a new IEP with the school. But they wouldn't budge.

Joan shared her concerns with Ashley's pediatrician at **Boston Children's Hospital**, and the care team connected her to MLP | Boston. After assessing the situation, we connected the family to volunteer attorney **Jared Levin**, who represented the family *pro bono*. Jared was able to negotiate a new IEP that better meets Ashley's needs in reading — meaning Ashley has the tools she needs to tackle her education successfully and Joan can focus on other substantial parenting responsibilities.

Thank you, Jared!



8th ANNUAL PRO BONO BREAKFAST



Lauren Taylor

On April 7, key MLP stakeholders came together to celebrate our *pro bono* panel's role in advancing health through justice, and to learn more about *The American Health Care Paradox* from the book's co-author **Lauren Taylor**. (You can [read Lauren's thoughts on "mainstreaming" MLP on this blog post](#).) We also heard a moving testimonial from a **Dana-Farber Cancer Institute** patient-family. When a critical unemployment benefits application hit an unexpected snag that diverted attention from key treatments, a DFICI Resource Specialist connected the family to MLP | Boston for legal care. This family was successfully supported by MLP | Boston **Access to Justice Fellow Myra Green**, and was happy to have a chance to acknowledge her important contributions at the breakfast.

Special thanks to **Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP** for both hosting and sponsoring this terrific event!

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

- *When Social Complexity Drives Medical Complexity*: We're thrilled to be partnered with **Cambridge Health Alliance**, **Hallmark Health System**, **Mount Auburn Hospital** and other regional stakeholders in an innovative *Health Care Workforce Transformation Fund Training* initiative convened by the **Metro North Regional Employment Board**. With CHA, we co-authored and presented a poster ([click on image to the right](#)) at the **Institute for Healthcare Improvement's 16th Annual International Summit on Improving Patient**



Care in the Office Practice and Community last month in Dallas, TX. The grant that makes this work possible was issued by the **Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development**, and is administered by **Commonwealth Corp.**

- It's an honor to have been tapped by **The Children's Trust** to manage an exciting pilot that will embed an attorney in a Healthy Families home visitor team in Greater Fall River. **Healthy Families America** is a national home-based family support and coaching program; **Healthy Families Massachusetts** programs support young, first-time parents and help them create stable, nurturing environments for their children. Healthy Families Massachusetts is administered by The Children's Trust, and this MLP pilot is the first of its kind within the national Healthy Families America network. MLP | Boston looks forward to partnering with collaborator **South Coastal Counties Legal Services, Inc.** in this effort.
- *Best Beginnings for Babies*: Thanks to a major grant from the **W.K. Kellogg Foundation** and with key support from **Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan**, the **Boston Medical Center Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology** soon will launch a innovative new study in the domain of maternal and child health. This project aims to improve birth outcomes and decrease the cost of perinatal care for low-income pregnant women exhibiting a high degree of social risk and unmet basic needs through a pioneering maternity care model — coordinated support from **Birth Sisters** and **MLP | Boston** — that tackles the social determinants of health. Founded in 1999, Birth Sisters is a community doula program that provides peer support during pregnancy, childbirth and the early postpartum period.
- MLP | Boston is proud to be a new partner to the **Massachusetts Resiliency Center**, which provides a range of supportive services to survivors of the Boston Marathon bombing and related events. We look forward to supporting survivors' ongoing needs for legal care.

MLP ON THE MOVE

- *Preventing Homelessness for Older Adults Through Integration*: We were honored to co-present on *Aging Right in the Community*, our collaboration with **Boston Medical Center's Elders Living at Home Program**, at the annual conference of the **American Society on Aging** in Chicago last month, and at the **10th Anniversary MLP Summit** last week in McLean, VA. *During the first year of this initiative, coordinated case manager-lawyer advocacy prevented homelessness for 91% of medically complex older adults served.*
- *Innovation in Cancer Care Delivery: Using a Patient-Centered and Community Research Approach*: Naomi Ko, MD, MPH, of the **Boston Medical Center Women's Health Unit** presented this poster ([click on image to the right](#)) at the **10th Anniversary MLP Summit** last week in McLean, VA. In it, the team describes the methods guiding Project SUPPORT, a randomized controlled trial in progress that compares standard patient navigation for newly diagnosed cancer patients with MLP-enhanced navigation for that same population.



TIMELY TIPS: NEW STATE LAWS OFFER HEALTH-PROMOTING PROTECTIONS

The Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Bill is Now Law!

There is great need for increased housing, shelter and services for youth and young adults who are living on their own. Learn more about this issue and what the Act accomplishes [here](#).

Expansion of Parental Leave Rights

Effective April 7, 2015, businesses in Massachusetts with six or more employees must guarantee 8 weeks of unpaid parental leave to a parent of any gender for the birth or adoption of a child. Under existing federal law, employees of businesses with more than 50 employees are eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid parental leave for the birth or adoption of a child.

Additional Protections for Survivors of Domestic Violence

Good News! Massachusetts recently enacted a [comprehensive new law](#) expanding protections for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The developments include job-protected leave for survivors who work for covered employers, the creation of two new domestic violence crimes, and other related court reforms.

MLP IN THE NEWS

Did you notice? When *The New York Times* re-capped "[Big Ideas in Social Change, 2014](#)" last December, author Tina Rosenberg spotlighted lawyers as having a key role to play in addressing social determinants of health. Hear hear!

NEW TEAM MEMBERS

MLP recently welcomed two interns, Michelle Savuto, a student at Brandeis University, and Julia Wedgle, a student at Tufts University. Here, in their own words, are their goals for these internships:



Michelle: I first learned about MLP | Boston during my internship last summer with Children's HealthWatch at Boston Medical Center. As an undergraduate at Brandeis University studying health policy and law, I hoped to gain experience in healthcare law and pursue different avenues of advocating for people in need. MLP | Boston's focus on addressing legal issues through the prism of the social determinants of health is an exciting area for me to explore. I look forward to the knowledge and experience I will gain here and hope to apply the skills I learn to my future career.



Julia: As a Community Health and Peace and Justice Studies double major, interning at MLP | Boston is a great opportunity to see how my passion for healthcare and justice can be combined to make real-world change. Eventually I want to go to law school and get a joint JD/MPH. The intersection between the law and healthcare is often overlooked and this intersection can help address many issues in our healthcare system. Interning at MLP | Boston I am able to learn more about many social determinants of health and how the law can work to address these. I am excited to learn from this internship and continue to see how the law can effectively be used to improve healthcare in Boston and beyond.

Connect with us!



MLP | Boston's mission is to equip healthcare, public health and human services teams with legal problem-solving strategies that promote health equity for vulnerable people. We are a fiscally sponsored program of [Third Sector New England, Inc.](#)

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