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Cross-Sector Convening Showcases Strategies to Improve Health while Reducing Costs

Rhode Island and Massachusetts Leaders Spotlight Need to Address Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) in New “Accountable Care” Landscape

Providence, RI: Today at The Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, MLPB convened healthcare and public health leaders from Rhode Island and Massachusetts to examine how accountable care restructuring impacts efforts to address people’s health-related social needs. Leaders of accountable entities, public health departments, hospitals, health centers, and human services organizations came together to explore best practices shared by experts in the field.

[View event program](#)

According to event panelist **Pano Yeracaris, MD, MPH**, chief clinical strategist for the RI-based Care Transformation Collaborative, “We can’t just recycle blueprints from clinical and behavioral healthcare to tackle challenges like food insecurity, housing instability and domestic violence. Healthcare has a lot of learning to do because social needs are different, yet more relevant to individual and population health than biological factors.”

Grounded in [MLPB’s expertise in workforce and community needs](#), speakers spotlighted these key ingredients for a health system that is truly accountable to individuals and families:

- **Using screening for SDOH as an opportunity to build partnerships with individuals and families.** As systems integrate a new kind of encounter – screening people for SDOH – it is essential to [assess strengths](#), not just risks or deficits. This approach builds the trust necessary to actually partner with patients and their families and solve problems together.
- **Integrating new care team members – like community health workers – who are equipped to “treat” SDOH.** Care teams need [new members that can help individuals and families access concrete supports](#) (like food, energy, and housing) and ensure that their legal rights – as tenants, as immigrants, and more – are respected.
- **Changing policy to align healthcare financing with SDOH.** Levers such as [risk adjustment](#) can help assure that healthcare organizations are adequately compensated for their care of medically and socially complex consumers, and that people get more of the services they need to be healthy.

“Now that value matters more than volume, health systems have new incentives to recognize and address the social determinants of health that impact people and populations,” said MLPB CEO **Samantha Morton**. “We want to support the health workforce to successfully meet these new, high-stakes responsibilities.”

About MLPB: MLPB equips healthcare and human services workforces with upstream problem-solving strategies that address health-related social needs. Leveraging our public interest law expertise, we advance health equity for individuals, families, and communities. <http://www.mlpboston.org>

With origins in Boston and the medical-legal partnership movement, **next-generation** MLPB is now scaling, providing training and technical assistance to healthcare and human services systems in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and beyond – those that are committed to *social health integration* that keeps individuals and families at the center of their systems alongside critical sustainability goals.

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