

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

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### MLP MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Mrs. Joseph's living conditions were making her sick. An older adult with asthma, whose husband had recently passed away, Mrs. Joseph was living with friends in a private apartment that had both mold and a terrible mouse infestation, as well as suspected gas leakages. As a result of these poor conditions and their impacts on her asthma, Mrs. Joseph had been hospitalized multiple times. Her primary care physician was very concerned and contacted MLP | Boston. We supported Mrs. Joseph in getting a Breathe Easy at Home inspection of the unit's condition, as well as securing medically-based priority status for a public housing unit of her own. Mrs. Joseph is now living in an apartment free of asthma triggers, and has had no recent hospitalizations.

If you would like to help us help others like Mrs. Joseph, please consider [making an end-of-year donation to MLP | Boston](#). **Your support can make a real difference in the health and well-being of a family!**

**DONATE**

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### A TIMELY TIP FOR CLINICAL PARTNERS



**A rare glimmer of good news about family shelter ("Emergency Assistance") access:**

Modestly increased state funding to support homeless families living in shelter motels is on the horizon. These funds will augment HomeBASE funding (up to \$4,000) by providing up to an additional \$2,000, meaning eligible families will have up to \$6,000 total to pursue alternatives to living in motel shelter.

Also, if a family's \$6,000 runs out and its effort to find/stabilize affordable housing does not bear fruit despite following the program rules, the family can get into shelter once 3 months have passed since its receipt of augmented HomeBASE funds (and provided the family still meets other EA shelter eligibility requirements). This is a positive change to a prior regulation that usually barred families from shelter for 12 months if they accepted even less funds through HomeBASE. We hope this policy improvement benefits many families that were otherwise at even higher risk of abject homelessness during these cold winter months.

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### MLP IN THE NEWS

On January 13, 2014 from 2:30-4:00 PM, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation *Commission to Build a Healthier America* will release new recommendations on how best to address social determinants of health. MLP | Boston will be featured as a model innovation in a video broadcast through this live online event. To register for the webcast or for more information, visit <http://www.rwjf.org/en/about-rwjf/newsroom/features-and-articles/Commission.html>.

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## NEW STAFF



In early December, MLP welcomed Deborah Durant as a Staff Attorney. Before joining the MLP family, Deborah was a Deal Manager at Oracle Corporation. While an undergrad, Deborah interned with MLP | Boston when it was known as the Family Advocacy Program. While a law student, Deborah was a legal intern at the National Consumer Law Center; represented youth at the Boston Municipal Court as a student attorney in the juvenile defender's clinic; and taught Constitutional Law to Boston high school students as a Marshall Brennan Fellow. Deborah earned her law degree from Suffolk University School of Law, an MA in Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning & Child Development from Tufts University, and a BA in Child Development and Community Health also from Tufts. She also is fluent in Haitian Creole!

Welcome Deborah!

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## PROJECT UPDATES

- ***Ageing Right in the Community.*** MLP | Boston and the Elders Living at Home Program (ELAHP) at BMC have been establishing themselves as a working team on behalf of low-income, medically vulnerable older adults confronting housing instability. Early in 2014, we will outreach to community partners to welcome additional referrals of at-risk elders. According to ELAHP Program Director Eileen O'Brien, "[j]ust in these first few months of partnering, it's clear that our housing case management efforts are really strengthened by the MLP connection. MLP flags legal risks to clients that often aren't obvious, and identifies potential solutions."
- ***Vital Village Network Awarded Implementation Grant.*** Renee Boynton-Jarrett, MD, ScD, shared exciting news with the Vital Village Network, in which MLP | Boston has participated as a design team member and innovation grantee throughout the past planning grant year: "We are very humbled and pleased to announce that our collective efforts have resulted in an implementation grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. We would like to celebrate this accomplishment for our Network by recommitting to our shared goals for promoting child, family and community well-being." MLP | Boston is grateful to the Foundation for its support, and honored to be working with Dr. Boynton-Jarrett and the diversity of inspiring community residents and professionals in the Vital Village Network. Vital Village is a network of residents and organizations committed to maximizing child, family and community well-being.

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## 4TH ANNUAL MA MLP CONFERENCE

On October 28<sup>th</sup>, MLP | Boston hosted the fourth annual Massachusetts Medical-Legal Partnership conference, which drew 125 interdisciplinary stakeholders not only from New England, but also from as far away as Arkansas and Saskatchewan. Former MA Department of Public Health Commissioner John Auerbach spoke about the progress that's been made in reducing health disparities in Massachusetts, as well as many challenges that remain on the path to full health equity for vulnerable populations in this state and beyond. A plenary panel of



health care providers, administrators, and researchers spoke frankly about the systems that need to more fully align before social determinants of health can be addressed effectively and efficiently. Conference participants then proceeded to engage in 12 separate workshops on subjects ranging from MLP best practices in trauma-informed advocacy, to current research on the impact of legal care on patients' treatment adherence to cancer patients' rights, to reasonable accommodation from their employers so they can get healthy and remain stably employed. According to one participant, the conference involved "[e]xcellent topics, presenters, and handouts. I wish I could have attended every session."

**MLP Conference Plenary Panel** (left-right):

- Melissa Shannon, JD, Director of Government Relations and Public Affairs, Commonwealth Care Alliance
- Áron Boros, JD, MPP, Executive Director, Center for Health Information and Analysis
- James Burgess, PhD, Professor of Health Policy and Management, Boston University School of Public Health
- James Corbett, MDiv, JD, Vice President of Community Health & Ethics, Steward Health Care System
- Kirsten Meisinger, MD, Medical Director, Union Square Family Health Center, Cambridge Health Alliance  
PCMH Ambassador, Special Projects Coordinator, Department of Family Medicine at CHA
- Stanley Hochberg, MD, Senior Vice President for Quality, Safety and Technology, Boston Medical Center

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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.

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