



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

GUARDIANSHIP PLANNING AFTER A CANCER DIAGNOSIS

A [Good Samaritan Medical Center](#) (GSMC) social worker initiated an MLP consult on behalf of Ms. Pen, an oncology patient receiving treatment at the hospital. Ms. Pen has sole custody of her minor grandchild and was worried about his future should she no longer be able to care for him. Ms. Pen wanted to ensure that an alternate guardian would be in place, but didn't know where to turn.

The MLP attorney met with Ms. Pen, prepared a Guardianship Nomination, and advised Ms. Pen step-by-step on how to file a Guardianship Petition should that become necessary. Thanks to this social worker-MLP partnership (including dedicated effort by an attorney based at the [Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts](#)), Ms. Pen now reports that she is less stressed about her grandchild's future, and better able to concentrate on her own cancer treatment and well-being.

YOU'RE INVITED!

Please join us on **Wednesday, May 11** from **8:00-9:30am** at **MLPB's 9th Annual Pro Bono Breakfast**, recognizing the inspiring work of our *pro bono* volunteer partners and bringing our interdisciplinary colleagues together to stay current in health equity strategies. On the heels of [Minority Health Month](#) (April), we are thrilled to feature as our speaker on the topic of ***Strategies for Health Equity in MA:***



Rodrigo Monterrey
Acting Director
[Office of Health Equity](#)
[Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#)

A light breakfast will be provided. Please join us (at no cost) at:

WilmerHale
60 State Street
Boston

RSVP: E-mail Meg Baker at mbaker@mlpboston.org
Space is limited so RSVP early!

MLPB IN THE NEWS

- ***New MLPB Issue Brief:***

[Elder Abuse Perpetrated by Adult Children and its Consequences for](#)

[Housing Insecurity: Why We Need to Recognize IPV-Parallel Elder Abuse in Housing Law and Public Policy](#)



- **Strengthening Social Structures:** MLPB is identified as a forward-looking organization that positively impacts health in [Community Catalyst's](#) recent blog post "[Why Strengthening America's Social Structures is Essential for Health.](#)"

We look forward to learning more about the vision of their new [Center for Consumer Engagement in Health Innovation!](#)

MLPB ON THE MOVE

- **Supporting communities served by [St. Elizabeth's Medical Center](#):** We are thrilled to be at the start of a five-year partnership with SEMC focused on the health-related social needs of high-risk pregnant and parenting women (particularly those with substance use disorders) and their infants. Approved by the [Massachusetts Department of Public Health](#) and launched this past February, this Community Health Initiative will promote substantial capacity-building in SEMC providers and staff and bolster their health-related problem-solving efforts with families.

- **Strengthening families through the integration of legal advocacy into a home visiting program:** MLPB attorney Dan Hyman presented this poster (link at right) at the national [MLP Summit](#) earlier this month in Indianapolis. Co-authored with [Sarita Rogers](#) of [Children's Trust/Healthy Families MA](#), the poster summarizes what we've learned from the pilot integration of an MLPB lawyer into a home visitor team (Greater Fall River Healthy Families, a project of People, Inc.) over the past year: *a high dose of home visitor + a low dose of lawyer* can be very effective in helping families secure concrete supports!



It Takes Two in Action!

Ashley Carreiro, Program Supervisor at Greater Fall River Healthy Families finds it valuable to have MLPB's *It Take Two* guides at her finger tips! You can

[view or download MLPB's *It Takes Two* guides here.](#)

- **Building a Toolkit to Prevent Homelessness for Vulnerable Older Adults:** MLPB Legal Director **JoHanna Flacks** co-presented on our collaboration with [Boston Medical Center's Elders Living at Home Program](#) at the annual conference of the [American Society on Aging](#) in Washington, DC last month. *During year 1 of the Aging Right in the Community initiative, coordinated case manager-lawyer advocacy prevented homelessness for 91% of medically complex older adults served. During year 2, this percentage rose to 93%. All clients successfully housed during year 1 remained housed during year 2.*
- **Best Beginnings for Babies:** MLPB staff attorney **Elizabeth Brusie** co-presented at [Boston Medical Center's](#) OBGYN Grand Rounds last month with **Julie Mottl-Santiago, CNM, MPH, Director of Midwifery Services** at BMC. Elizabeth and Julie discussed the randomized controlled trial underway with BMC's [Birth Sisters Program](#), which is testing whether birth outcomes will improve (and whether the costs of perinatal care will decrease) when social high-risk pregnant women are

offered support in the form of an MLPB-backed doula (birth coach). Thanks to funding from the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#), this is the first time a public interest lawyer has been formally integrated into a doula team.

- **Mechanizing MLP for New Colleagues:** Over 75 colleagues spanning pediatricians, lawyers, early childhood systems leaders, Family Specialists, and parents gathered in Los Angeles in March to prepare for launch of the [DULCE](#) national demonstration project in five communities in California, Florida, and Vermont. This meeting supported teams in mapping continuous quality improvement methods into their implementation efforts. It's gratifying to be supporting the innovative legal teams who are participating in this rigorous project being led by the [Center for the Study of Social Policy](#).



Who knew Mr. Potato Head is a QI "teacher"?
Here's DULCE Family Specialist Cynthia Garcia from LA!

DID YOU KNOW?

- **Fuel Assistance Deadline:** The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the state agency that oversees the fuel assistance program in the Commonwealth, has *increased the maximum benefits allotment per eligible household*. **The last date to apply for fuel assistance is May 13!** Visit the [Low Income Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\) website](#) for forms and more information.
- **Smoke-free Public Housing Rules:** More and more multi-family housing is going smoke-free in order to reduce non-smoking tenants' exposure to second- and third-hand smoke, and to prevent fires. In November 2015, HUD issued a proposed smoke-free public housing rule, accepting public comments through mid-January 2016: <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/periodicals/em/winter16/highlight2.html>. A final rule has not yet been issued.

This is a fascinating and challenging area that brings public health and non-discrimination principles into tension. MLPB has been proud to participate in the [Massachusetts Partnership for Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Tobacco-Free Living Community of Practice](#) to support the balancing of crucial indoor air quality and fire prevention goals with an important competing public health goal: prevention of eviction and homelessness for persons with disabilities who, because of their disabilities, find it more difficult to adhere with smoking cessation programs or lease provisions that require tenants to go outdoors to smoke.

Fair housing law recognizes that: (1) persons with various disabilities, including asthma and cancer, may be at especially high health risk when exposed to second- and third-hand tobacco smoke; and (2) some tenants who smoke have disabilities that impair their ability to adhere with no-smoking rules. The right to reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities may address the needs of tenants with disabilities, confronting either challenge. We look forward to continuing the dialogue with public health and civil rights stakeholders as this area of law develops. Our [It](#)

[Takes Two guide on medical certifications](#) provides practical guidance to members of the healthcare team supporting tenants' reasonable accommodation requests.

ANNUAL APPEAL

As health systems change, we are working hard to ensure that people's social health is meaningfully reflected in care team re-design and health-related service expansion. Please consider making a contribution to MLPB now!

DONATE

Our 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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