



USING LEGAL SERVICES
AS PART OF A
COMMUNITY STRATEGY
TO IMPROVE
MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH



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Presented on March 17, 2022

Needs Assessment for P-LAW

In 2020, the Georgetown University Health Justice Alliance conducted a needs assessment with our medical partner:

Most common health-harming legal issues observed by WIS providers:



Unstable or unsafe housing



Employment issues (accommodations, etc.)



Public benefits (disability, TANF, etc.)



Family law (custody, etc.)



Health insurance



Financial issues



Domestic violence

Additional needs assessment findings:

- Unmet legal needs currently being referred to the social work team
- Strong interest from the WIS team in the medical-legal partnership model
- Screening fatigue from providers and patients
- Patients often have multiple legal needs

Training(s) & Materials

Trainings

- What is an MLP?
- Issue Spotting and Referrals
- Employment Law
- P-LAW Screening Guidance Chart
- Referral Feedback Form

Sample Provider(s) Letters Created:

- Leave of Absence Request (work)
- Work Schedule Accommodations
- Work Duties Accommodations
- Educational Accommodations
- Housing Accommodation - Emotional Support Animal

CASE STUDY –BREAK OUT

It is July 13th and Alicia Smith is here for her 28 week appointment. When Alicia came in last month, she was very excited because she was getting ready to move out on her own into a new apartment. Alicia is usually well-groomed, however, at this appointment, she looks a little worse for wear. Her chart shows a decline in weight since her last appointment. She admits money is a little tight right now and she eats what and when she can and puts the rest towards her bills and getting ready for the new baby.

When you ask her how she is liking her new apartment, she states, “it’s a nightmare.” She was given a different unit than the one she signed for. The a/c does not work and it makes the apartment unbearably hot. She tried to talk to her landlord about it, but he has yet to return any of her calls or texts. Alicia’s electricity bill has sky-rocketed because she is forced to keep multiple fans running throughout the day and night and she has already fallen behind on her payment(s). She has trouble sleeping at night due to the heat and noise from all of the fans. She shares with you that she has been written up twice in the past week for falling asleep at work and her manager has threatened to take her off the schedule and dock her pay if she is late again. Her shift at the restaurant begins at 5:30am. Alicia is constantly on her feet and lifting more than 35 pounds despite her provider telling her she should limit how long she is on her feet and that she should not be lifting more than 25 pounds.



Type any challenges and barriers to her maternal health that may require more than just medical intervention to fix into the chat BUT do NOT hit enter until we instruct you to.

Breakout Room Activity

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What Can P-LAW Help With?

The Perinatal Legal Assistance & Well-being Project (P-LAW) offers NO-COST legal services to WIS patients. This document can help you identify patients who might need legal help. Here is a list of common legal issues that WIS patients may face and that should be referred to P-LAW, and additional information to gather and include in a referral. Note: the example legal issue list is not exhaustive; patients may have legal issues not listed here. When in doubt, make a referral to P-LAW!

Examples of Legal Issues P-LAW May Handle



Housing conditions

- Patient's housing has mold, bugs, rodents, etc. that the landlord has not taken care of



Landlord/tenant issues

- Landlord won't return security deposit after patient moves out
- Patient is seeking reimbursement for expenses that were landlord's responsibility



Utilities

- Patient is currently living without utilities or at risk of living in a unit without utilities



Benefits

- Patient needs help with SSI or SSDI (disability benefits) applications or appeals
- Patient has been denied for Social Security assistance
- Benefits (WIC, TANF, SNAP, etc.) were denied, reduced suddenly, or stopped or disappeared



Relevant Information to Include in P-LAW Referral

- Has the patient asked the landlord to fix the issues in their unit?
- Has the patient put the request in writing?
- Does the patient have pictures/videos of the issues?

- When did the issues start?
- Does the patient have a copy of their lease?
- Does the patient have documents or evidence of the issues?

- Which utilities are currently off or at risk of being turned off?

- Which benefits has the patient been denied? (e.g. SNAP, WIC, TANF, unemployment, SSI/SSDI)
- Has the patient received a written denial notice?
- Has the patient stopped receiving any of their benefits?
- Has the patient's benefits amount been reduced?

If you see any of these example legal issues or other legal issues, please collect the relevant information to the right of the legal issue, and make a referral to P-LAW.

QUESTIONS?



* NCMLP will email an updated Welcome Packet with the homework after every session.

Action Items for Next Session

1. Complete the Homework (Ada and Alice will discuss next!)
 2. Complete the Post-Attendance Evaluation

Contact Danielle Rahajason nrahajas@gwu.edu for assistance.



Homework

1. What do you wish you were doing now that you are not?
2. Identify a MLP action that you are really hoping to do in the next two months. Write a goals statement!

Identifying Interventions



1. Deciding what's important to you - what's the **Wish/Pain Point**?

What bugs you?

What bugs your patients or clients?

What is working but could work better?

Identifying Interventions



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What bugs you?

What bugs your patients or clients?

What is working but could work better?

2. Putting it in a doable way - a **SMART goal**

S Specific

M Measure

A Achievable

R Relevant

T Time-bound

Identifying Interventions



1. Deciding what's important to you - what's the **Wish/Pain Point**?

What bugs you?

What bugs your patients or clients?

What is working but could work better?

2. Putting it in a doable way - a **SMART goal**

S Specific

Within 3 months we have clients referred at a rate of 5 per week.

M Measure

Within 3 years we will obtain grant funding that will fund 80% of our costs.

A Achievable

R Relevant

Within 6 months we will increase the rate at which screeners get documented by 50%

T Time-bound



Homework

1. 2 minute: write down a wish / pain point
2. 5 minute: share with a colleague - help each other come up with a good SMART goal that includes something you can measure!

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-bound



Scan the QR code to read
[“6 Tips to Set SMART Goals for Lawyers”](#) from
The National Law Review.

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National Center for Medical  Legal Partnership
AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

 Center for
Children's
Advocacy
Yale
NewHaven
Health
Yale New Haven
Children's Hospital
 GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
HEALTH JUSTICE ALLIANCE



Thank you!

We'll See You at our Next Session

March 31, 2022, 2-3 PM ET
with a focus on Child Health

led by **Yale New Haven Children's Hospital** and the
Center for Children's Advocacy

Contact Danielle Rahajason nrahajas@gwu.edu for assistance.