



March 20, 2025 | 2 – 3 PM ET

Improving Maternal Health Access and Outcomes Through Medical–Legal Partnership





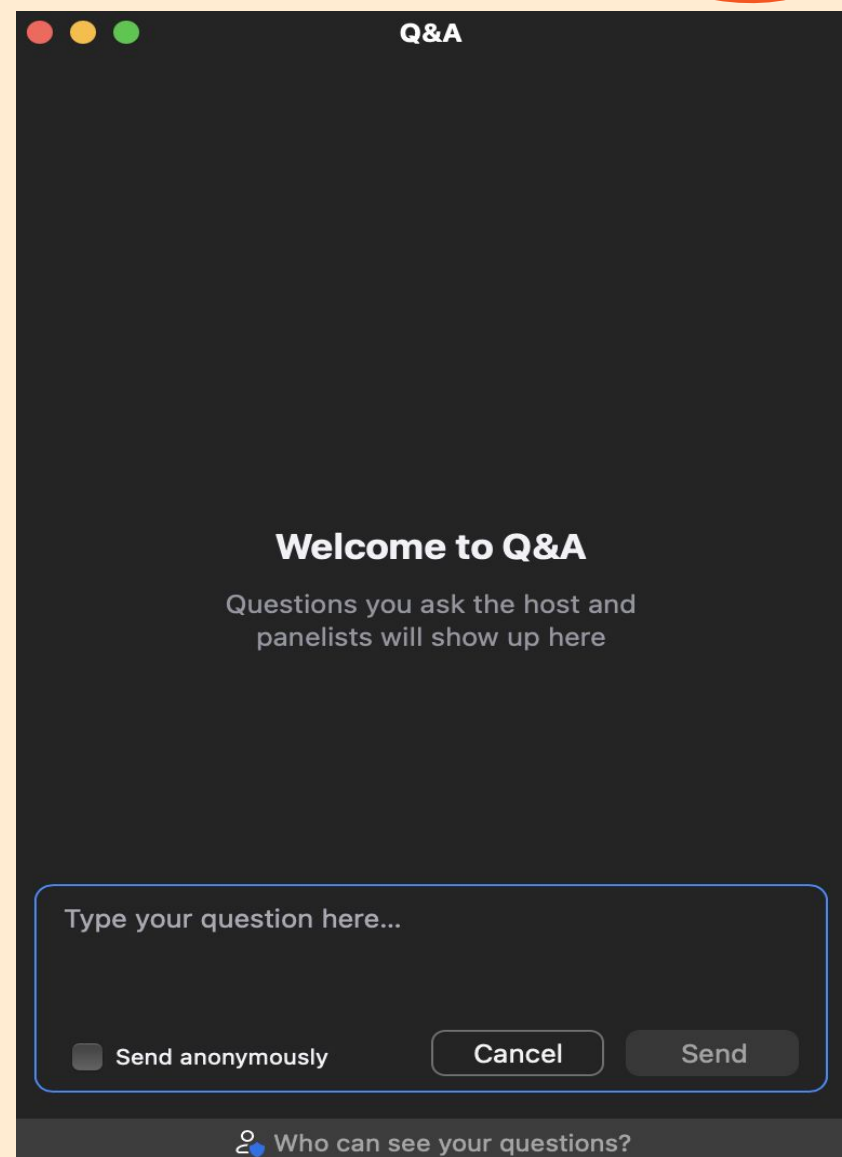
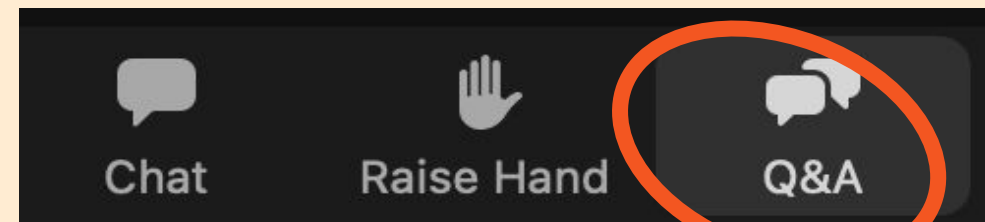
Bethany Hamilton, JD

Director

**National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership, based
at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at GWU**

Today's Moderator

Housekeeping



- Attendees are muted throughout the webinar.
- **Type questions into Chat or Q&A pane.**
- Send a chat to the Hosts & Panelists for help.
- To activate captions, select **“Live Transcript”** and **“Show Subtitle.”**
- This webinar will be recorded and shared at medical-legalpartnership.org/resources/

Learning Objectives

Leverage clinical and non-clinical measures to address social risk factors that impact maternal health access and outcomes

Plan or implement MLP strategies to create an integrated, multisector response to perinatal health

Utilize MLP to develop and pursue systemic change and improve population health

Agenda

Introduce our Speakers: MLP Practitioners (2 minutes)

Why: Brief video and considerations for maternal health, opioid/substance use disorder. (5 minutes)

What & How: Engage in a conversation with our speakers to learn more about their organizations and the purpose, components, services, and outcomes of their MLP. (30 minutes)

Discuss an example of a patient's legal journey through this MLP. (10 minutes)

Q&A with the Audience (10 minutes)

Close Out (2 minutes)

Sarah Mattson Dustin

Executive Director
New Hampshire Legal Assistance



Jonathan Teller-Elsberg

Staff Attorney
New Hampshire Legal Assistance



Teri LaRock

Clinical Director
Dartmouth Health, Moms in
Recovery



Our Panel of Subject Matter Experts

National Center for Medical  Legal Partnership

AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



STORIES OF SUBSTANCE USE STIGMA

March of Dimes

<https://www.marchofdimes.org/our-work/beyond-labels/substance-use>



National Center for Medical  Legal Partnership

AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



What if a patient's journey through recovery from SUD, legal systems, and pregnancy were designed to be **supportive, seamless, and successful**?



How can we **educate, empower, and equip** healthcare providers with the resources they need to support pregnant patients with SUD?



What can lawyers do to improve the health and wellbeing of pregnant patients, newborns, and impacted communities?



**Medical Legal Partnership between
Dartmouth Health
and
New Hampshire Legal Assistance**

Sarah Mattson Dustin

Executive Director
New Hampshire Legal Assistance



Jonathan Teller-Elsberg

Staff Attorney
New Hampshire Legal Assistance



Teri LaRock

Clinical Director
Dartmouth Health, Moms in
Recovery



Let's begin
the
conversation!

National Center for Medical  Legal Partnership

AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Can you tell us about New Hampshire Legal Assistance?

- Organization Type
- Mission and Vision
- Services
- Population
- Staffing
- Location



Website: <https://www.nhla.org/>



**Sarah
Mattson
Dustin**
Executive
Director
New
Hampshire
Legal
Assistance

For our members of the audience who may be unfamiliar with civil legal needs and services, can you help the audience understand what they are and how they fit into the social determinants of health framework?



**Sarah
Mattson
Dustin**
Executive
Director
New
Hampshire
Legal
Assistance

Civil Legal Needs *are* Subset of Social Needs that Drive Health Outcomes



Defining the terms

Medical-legal partnerships often reference social determinants of health, social needs, and legal needs. What is meant by each?

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

are broadly defined by the World Health Organization as the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age. These circumstances are shaped by economic and social policies, political systems, and social norms, and they contribute significantly to health disparities.

SOCIAL NEEDS

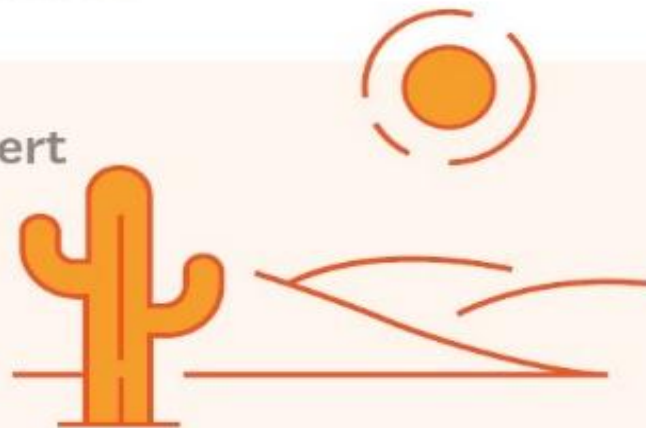
are the more immediate, individual needs that patients enter the health center with every day as a result of social determinants of health.

LEGAL NEEDS

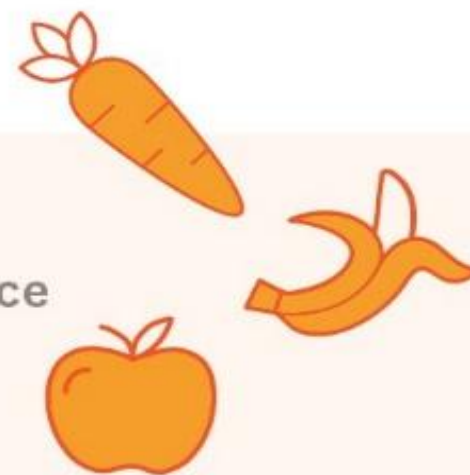
are, simply put, the subset of social needs that have legal solutions. The distinction is made to help health care organizations understand where lawyers can be helpful.

FOR EXAMPLE

A food desert



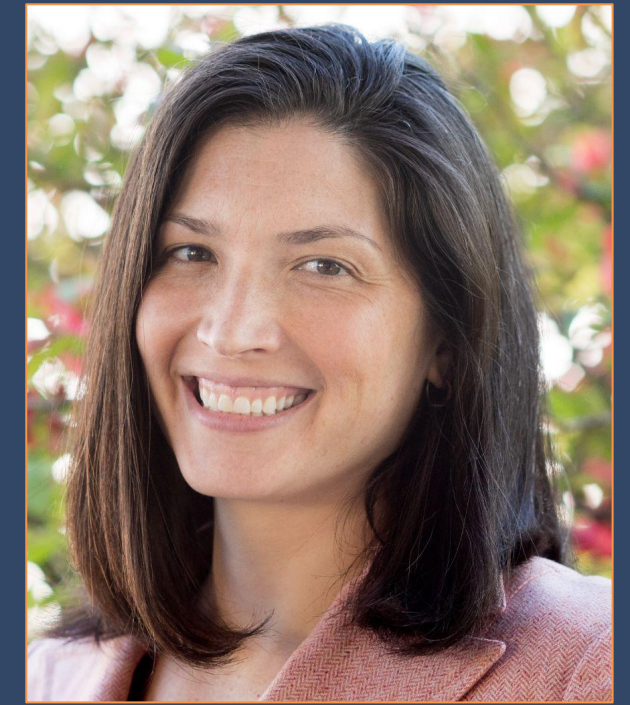
A family's need for fresh produce today



A family's need to file an appeal after their SNAP benefits are incorrectly cut



How would you define the medical-legal partnership (MLP) approach?



**Sarah
Mattson
Dustin**
Executive
Director
New
Hampshire
Legal
Assistance

The Medical–Legal Partnership Approach

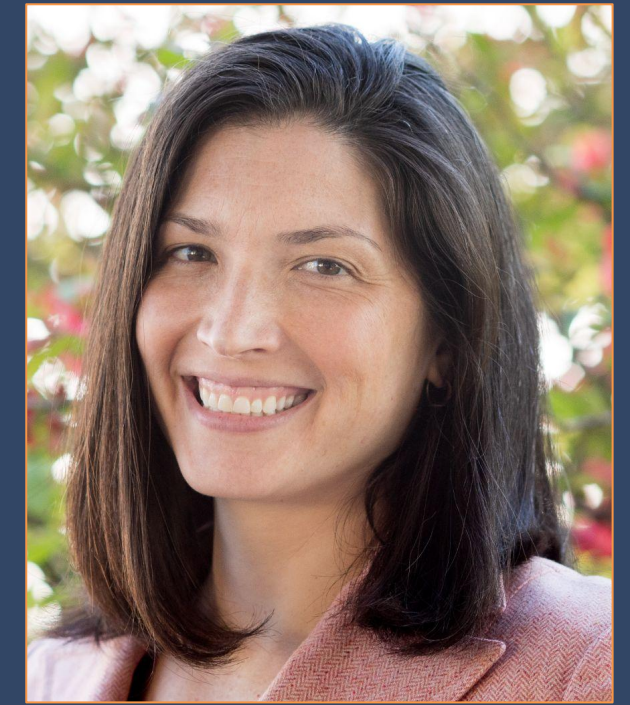


MEDICAL–LEGAL PARTNERSHIP (MLP) is an intervention where legal and health care professionals COLLABORATE to help patients resolve SOCIAL, ECONOMIC & ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS that contribute to HEALTH DISPARITIES and have a REMEDY in CIVIL LAW.

MLP is an:

- Evidence-based intervention
- Integrated service delivery model
- Effective strategy for closing the access to justice gap

**What led to the decision to
implement an MLP focused on
maternal / perinatal health?**



**Sarah
Mattson**
Dustin
Executive
Director
New
Hampshire
Legal
Assistance

From Legal Information to Medical-Legal Partnership

Piecemeal legal help might be offered in the form of:

- Legal clinics
- Referrals to legal services
- Legal information, e.g. pamphlets
- Screening for legal needs/issues

An MLP ensures a **warm handoff** from the medical to the legal partner so that patients/clients will not slip through interorganizational cracks. An MLP allows for **two-way communication** between the partners for benefit of the patient/client, within the limits allowed by law & professional ethics.



**Tell us about the MLP formed with
Dartmouth Health. What are its core
components?**



**Sarah
Mattson
Dustin**
Executive
Director
New
Hampshire
Legal
Assistance

Core Components of the MLP

“Lawyer in residence”



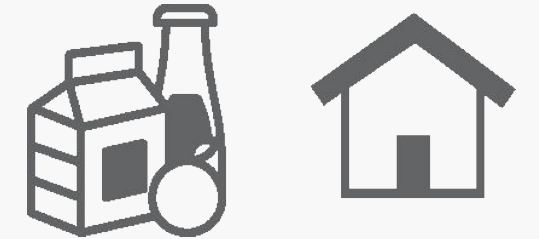
Formal agreement
b/t health & legal
orgs



Target
population



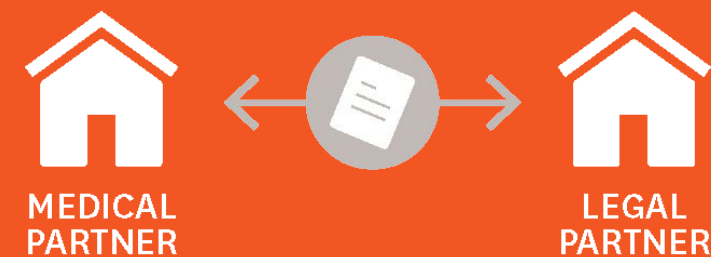
Patients screened
for legal needs



Designated resources



Information-sharing



Training on
SDOH



Legal staffing



Can you tell us about Dartmouth Health's Moms in Recovery Program?

Program?

- Organization
- Mission and Vision
- Services
- Population
- Staffing
- Location



Teri LaRock
Clinical Director
Dartmouth Health

Moms in Recovery

Moms in Recovery is a program for pregnant and parenting women who struggle with substance use.

We offer a variety of services to support pregnant and parenting women, including a full range of women's healthcare services:

- Prenatal care
- Immunizations
- Family planning
- Screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections and hepatitis
- Help with finding a primary care provider



Teri LaRock

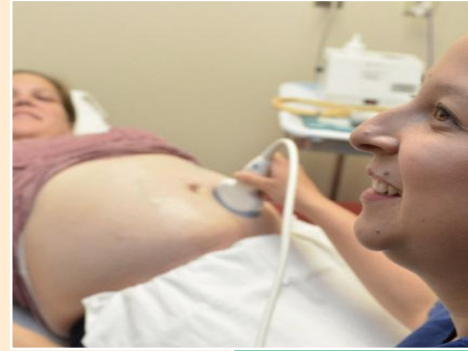
Clinical Director
Dartmouth Health

Moms in Recovery Program



Behavioral Health

- Medication for SUD and co-occurring diagnosis
- Perinatal psychiatry
- Group therapy
- Individual therapy
- Trauma-responsive care
- IOP and OP



Medical Services

- Prenatal care
- Primary care
- Sexual health care
- Hepatitis C treatment
- Family Medicine
- Dental collaboration



Supportive Services

- Peer support
- Case management
- Parenting classes
- Diaper bank
- Food shelf
- Playtime
- Health education and wellness
- Medical Legal Partnership
- Clothing exchange closet



Teri LaRock
Clinical Director
Dartmouth
Health

Let's talk about the impetus for the MLP. Can you share your perspective as the healthcare partner on why the Dartmouth Health Moms in Recovery Program needed to partner with a civil legal aid organization?



Teri LaRock

Clinical Director
Dartmouth Health

Before we speak with Jonathan about the detailed operations of the MLP, can you provide a basic explanation of how a patient from Moms in Recovery Program gets to work with the MLP Attorney? For example, are social needs screenings conducted for everyone? What sort of event triggers a referral?



Teri LaRock
Clinical Director
Dartmouth Health

Let's discuss the details.

First, tell us about yourself.

Then, can explain your role within the MLP? As you discuss your role, we'll focus on some of the core components of the MLP.



**Jonathan
Teller-Elsberg**
Staff Attorney
New Hampshire
Legal Assistance

Core Components of the MLP

Are you on site? How often?
“Lawyer in residence”



In your role as the MLP attorney providing services, do you also have to manage/negotiate the partnership?

Formal agreement
b/t health & legal orgs



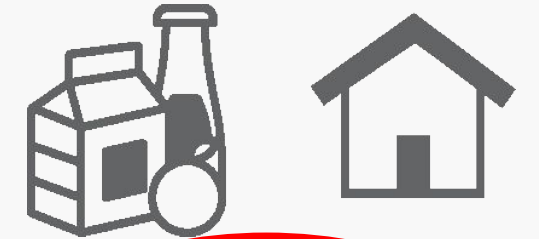
Do you only support patients that are a part of the MORE MLP?

Target population



Do you conduct any additional legal needs intake process?

Patients screened for legal needs



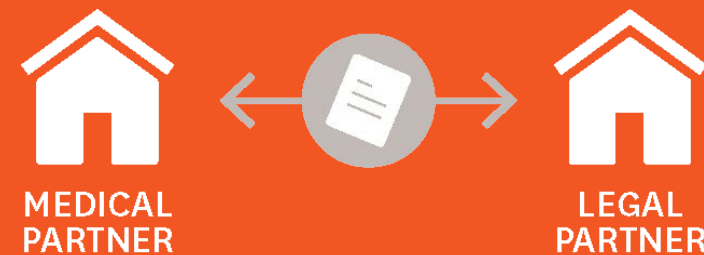
Is your role supported by resources specific to MLP?

Designated resources



How do you exchange information, e.g., via the EHR? Are you “closing the loop”?

Information-sharing



How do you support or train the MLP’s healthcare team?

Training on SDOH



What is the staffing for the MLP’s legal team, in addition to the attorney(s)?

Legal staffing



Can you help us understand how the day-to-day operations of the MLP?



Jonathan Teller-Elsberg
Staff Attorney
New Hampshire
Legal Assistance



A Patient's MLP Legal Journey | A Training & Job Aid

Found here: <https://medical-legalpartnership.org/mlp-resources/patient-mlp-legal-journey/>

Acknowledgements: This MLP patient legal journey graphic, training, and job aid were developed in 2023 for Kaiser Permanente's Health, Housing, and Justice: Medical-Legal Partnership Initiative in partnership with the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership and HealthBegins. Kate Marple from Who Tells the Story? developed and designed this training. Gerson Sorto from Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County provided critical insights and content for this training.

Dartmouth-NHLA MLP Day-to-Day Operation



**Jonathan
Teller-Elsberg**
Staff Attorney
New Hampshire
Legal Assistance

Referral

- Participant fills out referral form, *or*
- Participant walked to legal partner's office

Intake, case handling

- Meet participant
- Referral
- Counsel & advice
- Limited representation
- Full representation

Other coordination

- Share legal knowledge w/ medical partners
- Check in on participant status

Beneficial outcomes

Legal services are resulting in

- Domestic violence protective orders
- Avoided evictions
- Rent overpayment refunds
- Increased SNAP benefits
- Increased special education services
- Increased participation in recovery program

Medical services are resulting in

- Access to legal clients who may be hesitant to work with legal aid



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Sarah Mattson Dustin

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New Hampshire Legal Assistance



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New Hampshire Legal Assistance



Teri LaRock

Clinical Director
Dartmouth Health, Moms in
Recovery



What are some of the outcomes?

“Medical-legal partnership is a win-win. Our healthcare and community partners receive the benefit of dedicated, on-site legal services for the families they are serving, and the innovative model brings NHLA even closer to our clients and communities.”



Sarah Mattson Dustin
Executive Director
New Hampshire Legal Assistance



Any Questions?

Please use the Q&A function or Chat to post questions!

Sarah Mattson Dustin

Executive Director
New Hampshire Legal Assistance



Jonathan Teller-Elsberg

Staff Attorney
New Hampshire Legal Assistance



Teri LaRock

Clinical Director
Dartmouth Health, Moms in
Recovery



Q&A with the Audience



Resources

To learn more about the Dartmouth Health Moms in Recovery (MORE) program and their services, visit:

<https://www.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/moms-recovery>



Dartmouth Health Moms in Recovery is a safe space where you can meet with other women who are in recovery from addiction and get help.

What are the Possible Signs of a Substance Use Disorder?

- Spending a lot of your time and money on getting and using drugs
- Using more than you intend to or having difficulty stopping
- Feeling sick when you do not use drugs

What are Medications for Substance Use Disorders?

When you use heroin, alcohol or other substances, you are at higher risk for overdose and infections, which can harm both you and your baby or children.

We can prescribe medications to help you stop using substances, including buprenorphine (Suboxone) or naltrexone for opioid use disorders. We can also prescribe medications to help you stop using alcohol or tobacco.

Who We Are

Moms in Recovery is a program for pregnant and parenting women who struggle with substance use. At Moms in Recovery you will meet other women who are working hard to stop using substances and support each other as parents. You will be able to form close relationships with counselors, psychiatrists, midwives, primary care providers, case managers and recovery coaches. These professionals can support you in developing a healthy lifestyle that is rewarding and free from substance use.

Our Services

The Moms in Recovery program offers the following services:

- Peer recovery services
- Individual counseling
- Resource Specialist help with accessing:
 - Dental
 - WIC
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Insurance
 - Employment support
 - Residential treatment
- Case management and coordination
- Help stopping tobacco/vaping
- Medications for substance use disorders, including buprenorphine (Suboxone), Sublocade and Vivitrol
- Intensive Outpatient Program
- Group therapy with other mothers and pregnant women
- Help with depression, anxiety and PTSD symptoms
- Support for building healthy relationships
- Parenting classes
- Haven food pantry
- Diaper bank
- Clothing exchange closet
- Child care while attending appointments & groups
- Women and children's medical care
 - Primary care
 - Prenatal care
 - Family planning services
 - Sexual health care, including screening and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
 - Hepatitis C treatment

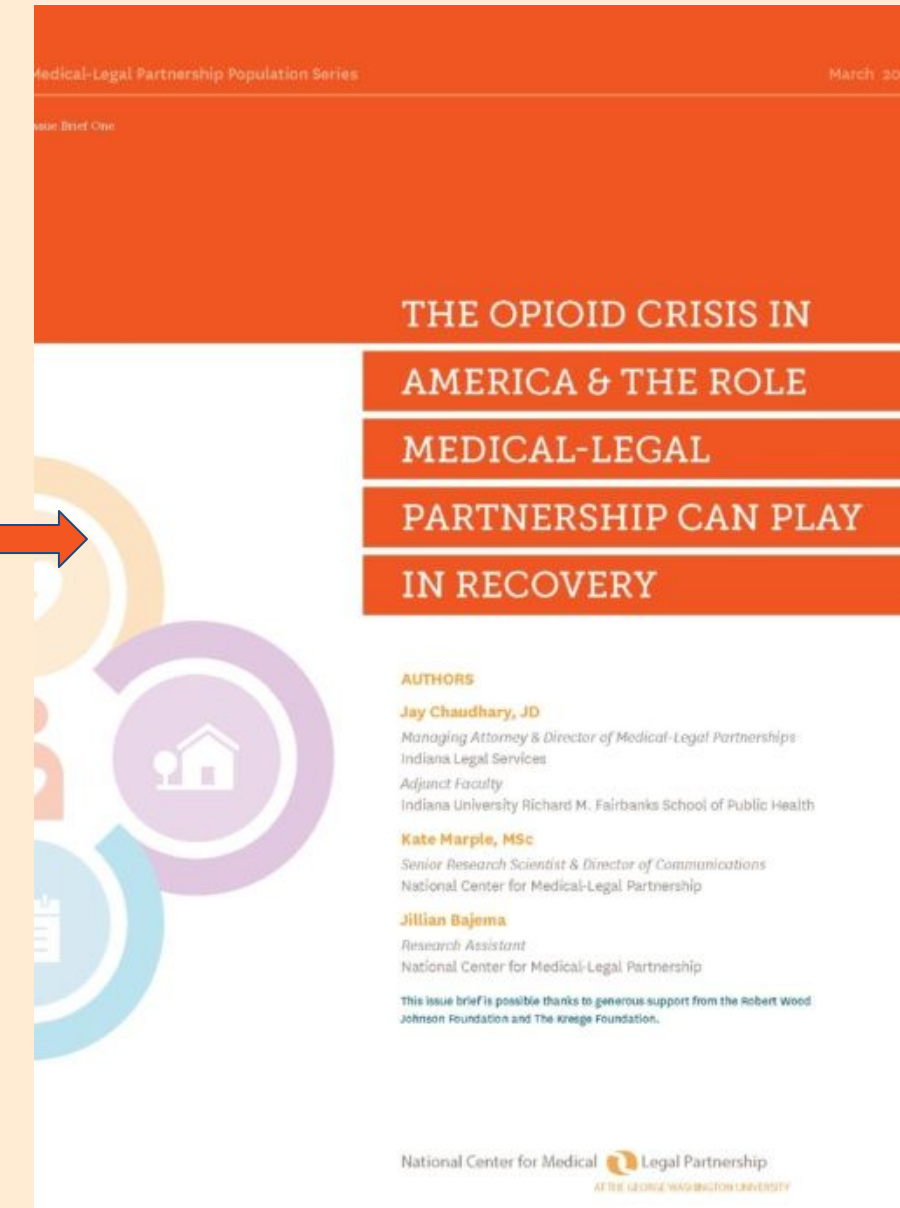
Additional Resources

[Renewal of Determination that a Public Health Emergency Exists Nationwide as a Result of the Continued Consequences of the Opioid Crisis](#) (HHS, March 18, 2025)

[The Opioid Crisis in America & the Role Medical-Legal Partnership Can Play in Recovery](#) (NCMLP Issue Brief, 2018)

[Connecting Community Health Centers & Courts to Improve Behavioral Health of People & Communities](#) (NCMLP Issue Brief, 2022) (See also, a related webinar recording [here](#).)

Medical-Legal Partnership as A Community Health Strategy To Improve Maternal and Child Health Access & Outcomes (NCMLP Learning Collaboratives): [2022 Learning Collaborative](#), [2023 Learning Collaborative](#), and [2024 Learning Collaborative](#)



Upcoming Webinars

MLP in Action Webinar Series (Part 1): Understanding and Addressing the Health-Related Legal Needs of Older Adults and their Families

March 26, 2025, at 2.30 PM ET

MLP Fundamentals Group Coaching Sessions: Information-Sharing and Privacy Essentials (Session 2-4)

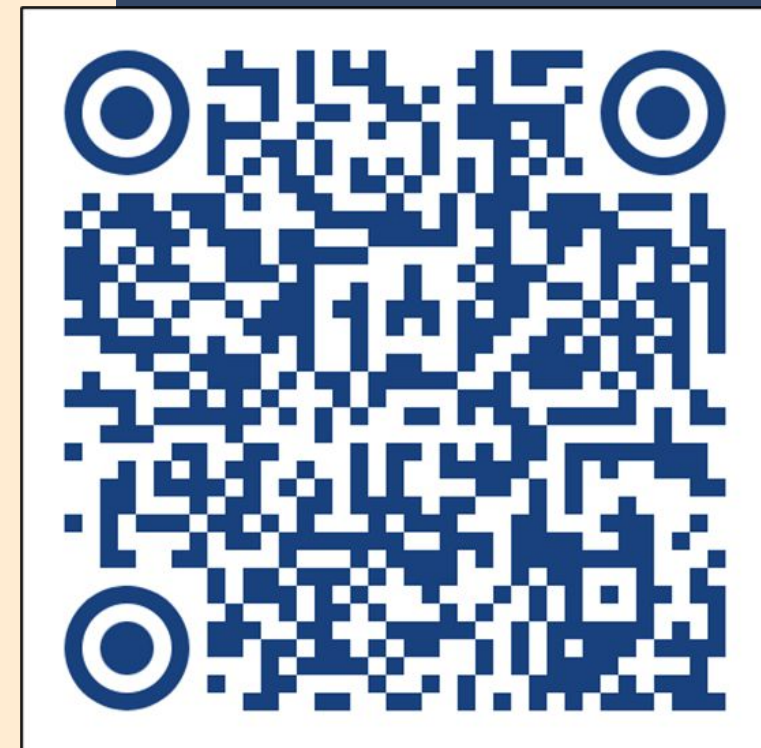
March 28, April 4, and April 11, 2025, at 2 – 3:30 PM ET

Getting the Funding You Need: Building Effective Relationships & Pitches

Sessions will be held weekly on Wednesdays

from April 2 – 23, 2025 at 2 – 3:30 PM ET

***Use the QR Code or visit:
<https://medical-legalpartnership.org/learning-opportunities/>***



Thank You

Please take a moment to
complete our post-session
evaluation survey!

[https://www.surveymonkey.
com/r/QJDFN68](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QJDFN68)

*A link to the survey is also in the
chat.*



Contact Us

*For more
information,
contact us at
ncmlp@gwu.edu*



- **Upcoming Trainings**

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