

Making the case for advancing health: Lessons from two Medical-Legal Partnership evaluations

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Speakers:

- **Bethany Hamilton, JD**, Director, *National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership*
- **Marisa Conner**, Community Health Consultant, *Kaiser Permanente*
- **Jeremy Spiegel, Esq.**, Medical-Legal Partnership Supervising Attorney, *Camden Coalition*
- **Dawn Wiest, PhD**, Director for Research and Evaluation, *Camden Coalition*

Moderated by: **Leigh Wilson-Hall**, Director for Care Management and Redesign Initiatives, *Camden Coalition*

This webinar hosted by the Camden Coalition in partnership with the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership and Kaiser Permanente, explored the evolving field of medical-legal partnerships (MLPs) and shared findings from two recent evaluations. The session highlighted both national trends and specific program insights from MLP implementations. Panelists discussed how integrating legal services into healthcare delivery models addresses urgent needs related to housing, substance use, and social determinants of health, ultimately improving outcomes for those who need it most.



Key takeaways

- Medical-legal partnerships (MLPs) are effective, scalable solutions for addressing social determinants of health. MLPs are expanding nationwide

and being embedded in diverse healthcare settings to address issues like housing instability, benefits denials, and legal barriers to recovery. They are proving to be both impactful and adaptable.

- MLPs enable access to legal services and improve patient outcomes, especially for vulnerable populations. Evaluations from Kaiser Permanente and the Camden Coalition show that MLPs reach patients who would not otherwise have access to legal services, improve recovery outcomes, and help patients navigate complex legal systems, all while increasing their confidence and stability.
- Collaboration is key to MLP success. Strong relationships between legal professionals, providers, and patients are foundational to the MLP model. This teamwork fosters trust, improves care coordination, and enables timely legal intervention.
- Ongoing evaluation is critical for sustainability. To grow and sustain MLPs, the field must continue building evidence through rigorous and ethically grounded research and advocate for stable funding streams, including public support like Medicaid and the Legal Services Corporation.

**“The research may slow you down a bit, but then
it’ll speed you back up again.”**

– Bethany Hamilton



Action steps

- If you’re implementing or planning an MLP, incorporate evaluation design early, even if it’s small scale or qualitative at first. Look for partners who can support this.
- MLP stakeholders should use evaluation data and client stories to advocate for continued and expanded funding, both public and private. Advocacy is

an important responsibility for MLP leaders and a necessary step to protect the legal infrastructure that supports the work.

- Legal and healthcare partners should prepare for an increase in clients needing help with coverage loss, appeals, and application complexity. Outreach to legal aid partners (if not already embedded) was strongly encouraged.
- Invest in short, role-specific training for clinicians on legal issues (e.g. housing law, patient eligibility) and ensure regular touchpoints between clinical and legal teams.
- Join the national community at the annual Putting Care at the Center conference in Portland, OR, October 15-17, 2025.



Resources for additional learning

- [**Making the Case for Medical-Legal Partnerships – An Updated Review of the Evidence. 2020-2024**](#)
- [**Health, Housing, and Justice: Two-Year Implementation Evaluation of a Health System’s Multi-State Medical-Legal Partnership to Address Housing Instability**](#)
- [**Offering holistic support: Findings from the Camden Coalition’s Medical-Legal Partnership evaluation**](#)
- [**Equal Justice Works Fellowship**](#)
- [**National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership resources**](#)
- [**MLP training and implementation resources from the Kaiser Permanente Medical-Legal Partnership Initiative**](#)