

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

July 24, 2025



National Center for Medical



Legal Partnership

AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY



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Agenda

- Housekeeping
- Brief presentations
- Panel discussion
- Closing remarks

Housekeeping

- This webinar is being recorded.
- We will email you the recording and slides following the live webinar.
- All questions can be submitted through the Q&A feature. We encourage you to put comments and resources in the chat.

Poll question 1

**What best describes your
role or perspective?**

Poll question 2

Does your organization
currently participate in a
Medical-Legal Partnership?

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



Bethany Hamilton, JD
*National Center for
Medical-Legal Partnership*



Jeremy Spiegel, Esq.
*Rutgers Law/
Camden Coalition*



Moderated by:
Leigh Wilson-Hall
Camden Coalition



Marisa Conner
Kaiser Permanente



Dawn Wiest, Ph.D
Camden Coalition

The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership

Our Team



Bethany Hamilton, JD

Director



Hannah Silverman, MPH

**Senior Research Associate,
KP MLP Project Manager**



Maria Casoni, MSL, MPH

**Research Scientist,
Staff**



Reha Manikandasamy, MS

**Data Scientist,
Center Associate**



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National Center for
Medical Legal Partnership



HEALTH
BEGINS

The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership

Our Mission and Work

Mission: To help every health system integrate the expertise of lawyers to help patients address and prevent health-harming legal needs.



Transform the focus of healthcare and civil legal aid practice from people to populations

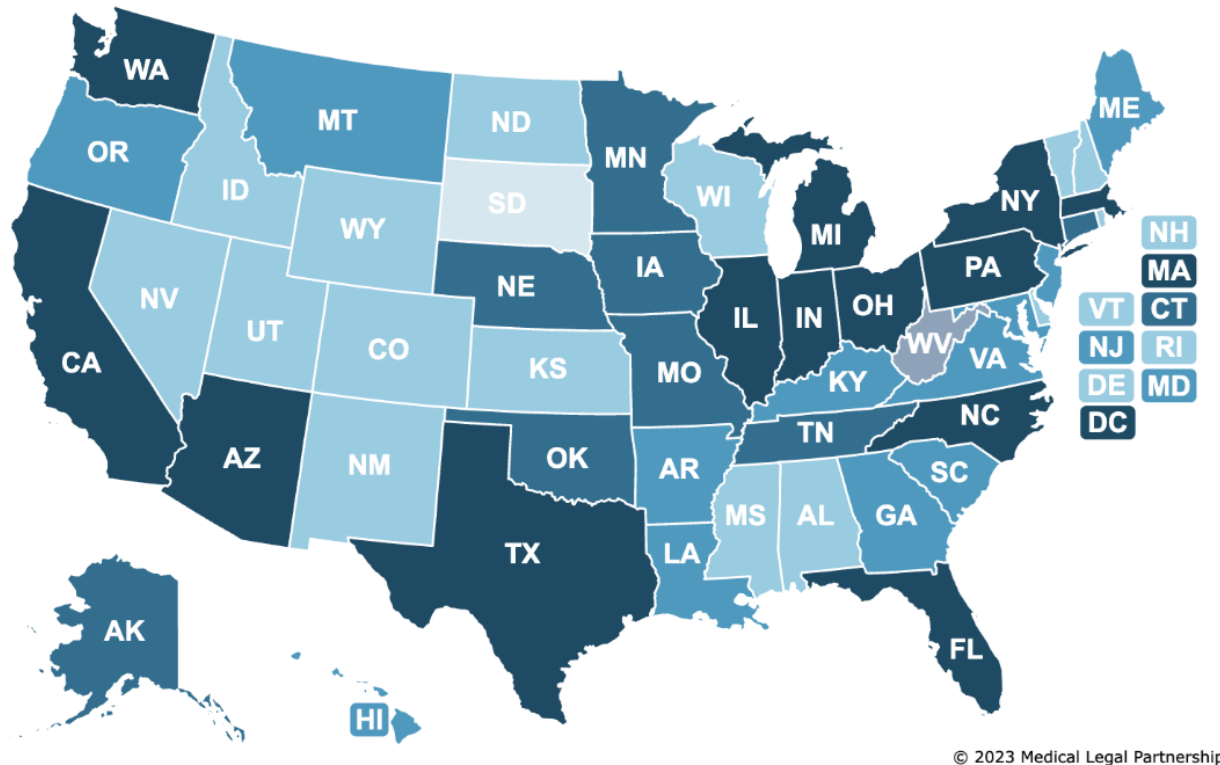


Build and inform the evidence base to support the medical-legal partnership approach



Redefine inter-professional education with an emphasis on training healthcare, public health and legal professionals together

The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership The National MLP Landscape



of Health Orgs with MLPs

0 1-3 4-6 7-9 10+

450-500

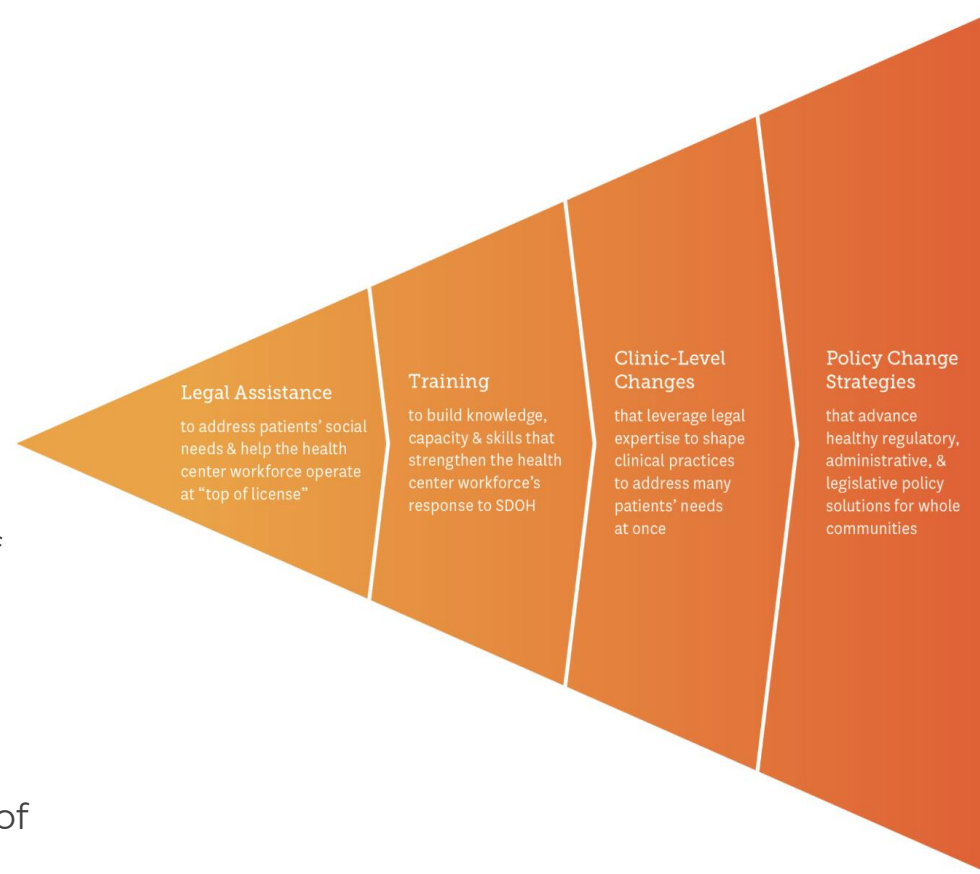
MLPs across the United States in

49 states

and the District of Columbia

The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership Literature Review

- Notable findings include:
 - Reductions in emergency department visits and hospitalizations
 - Increased recovery of public benefits for patients
 - Enhanced provider ability to address social determinants of health
 - Measurable cost savings for healthcare institutions.
- Underscores the importance of interprofessional education and workforce development in expanding the reach and effectiveness of MLPs.
- Evolution from evidence that supports implementation to evidence that supports outcomes across additional settings



Read More: "Making the Case for Medical Legal Partnerships: An Updated Review of the Evidence, 2020-2024, The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership , June 2025, <https://medical-legalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/MLP-Literature-Review-2020-2024.pdf>

The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership

Sustainability and Scaling

Challenges:

- Funding uncertainty for the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), the largest funder of civil legal aid
 - House Appropriations Subcommittee proposed a 46% cut to funding
 - Senate Appropriations committee proposed increasing LSC funding by \$6 million from the organization's \$560 million appropriation in FY 2025.
 - White House budget proposes eliminating/defunding LSC
- Uncertain/changing policy landscape

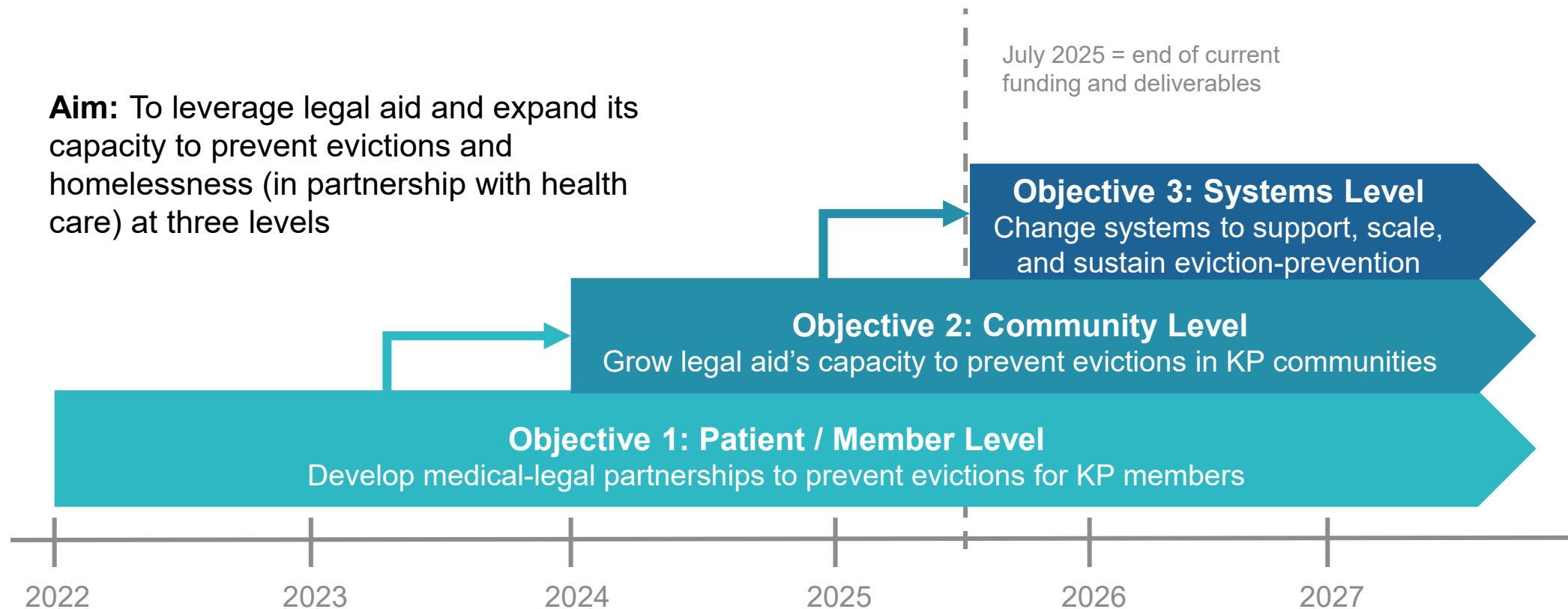


Bright Spots:

- Continued investment in MLP by private and public sector partners

Kaiser Permanente Medical-Legal Partnership Initiative

Key Objectives & Timeline



KP MLP Initiative Impact: 2024-2025

By the Numbers

Reached over

1,000

health, public health and legal leaders and practitioners in two major national webinars detailing the transformative impact of KP MLP initiative intervention, evaluation and tools and resources

Reached over

100

legal aid attorneys with KP MLP insights and tools at the biggest national legal aid conferences (Equal Justice and National Legal Aid & Defender)

Connected

20

grantee legal aid organizations through the KP MLP Learning Lab to build capacity for MLP practice

In

1

op-ed for the Baltimore Sun, highlighted the connection between housing and health and KP's investment in medical-legal partnership

Health Services Research Article

MLP Site Teams + Activities

Kaiser Permanente's Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) initiative aims to prevent evictions, increase housing stability, and improve health outcomes by embedding MLPs across the healthcare system and strengthening the broader legal aid community.

KP care teams within six KP regions learn to identify legal issues affecting patients' health and connect KP members to enhanced, community-based legal support.

KP MLP sites include the following activities:

1 Community Support Hub referrals: Local legal aid organizations accept in-network referrals for housing-related legal issues through the Community Support Hub (offering legal review and advice, drafting legal documents, advocating for housing, securing benefits, etc.).

2 Identification of patient legal issues: Clinical teams receive guidance from the legal teams through:

- 1-on-1 Curbside Consults
- Embedded Smartphrase in the Electronic Health Record (EHR)
- Regular Office Hour Trainings



Jan 2022

Northern California-Sacramento
Legal Services of Northern California



Feb 2022

Northern California-Vallejo
Legal Services of Northern California



June 2022

Mid-Atlantic States
Maryland Legal Aid



July 2022

Northwest
Legal Aid Services of Oregon



March 2023

Colorado
Colorado Legal Services



June 2023

Southern California-Los Angeles
Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County

Health Services Research Article

Evaluation Overview & Design

- **Overview:** The evaluation team at the Center for Community Health & Evaluation (*part of the Kaiser Permanente KP Washington Health Research Institute*) conducted a **mixed-methods implementation evaluation**.
 - MLPs were embedded within six sites located across four states within the Kaiser Permanente system.
 - Each “site” comprised a regional team of social workers, care navigators, or nurse case managers that received social needs referrals from physicians or conducted initial social needs intake assessments with new KP Medicaid members.
- **Time Period:** December 2021–November 2023
- **Data Sources and Analytic Sample:** Data sources included key informant interviews with healthcare and legal staff, surveys of social workers and care navigators, and administrative data on 857 legal referrals made by medical staff in 2022-2023 for housing-related legal support.
- **Observation and Document Review:** The evaluation team observed and took notes at planning meetings, learning events, and occasional office hours held by legal aid providers at the four initial MLP pilot sites. They reviewed tools, resources, meeting notes, and agendas for MLP-related meetings. **Thematic analysis was applied to notes from observations and document review.**
- **Triangulation Across Sites:** At the conclusion of the evaluation, themes from individual data sources were triangulated across sources to identify consistent, cross-cutting themes across the six MLP sites and site-level factors that contributed to successful MLP implementation.
 - **Quantitative data sources were used to provide implementation context** for each site (e.g., number of referrals made, number of staff who made referrals, and number of legal services provided);
 - **Qualitative data sources were used to derive key themes related to implementation facilitators and barriers.**

Health Services Research Article

Key Findings

1

Expanded Access: Attorneys reported that the MLP made legal assistance available to clients who otherwise would not have access to it.

2

Efficient Service Delivery: 82% of legal cases were resolved with fewer than 5 hours of attorney time.

3



Implementation Drivers: Success factors included **strong clinical champions, targeted staff training** on housing-related legal issues and referral protocols, and **existing social needs screening** infrastructure.

4

Challenges Identified: Barriers included **difficulties with information sharing**, acclimating legal teams to complex healthcare systems, and **geographic misalignment between Kaiser Permanente and legal aid service areas**.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Health, Housing, and Justice: Two-Year Implementation Evaluation of a Health System's Multi-State Medical-Legal Partnership to Address Housing Instability

Natasha Arora¹ | Sarah Terry¹ | Holly R. Stevens² | Vanessa W. Davis³ | Gerson Sorto⁴ | Bethany Hamilton⁵ | Marisa Conner³ | Alejandra Cabrera⁶ | Shane R. Mueller⁷ | Maria Casoni⁸  | Hiba Elkhatib³ | Ellen Lawton⁹  | Elizabeth Tobin-Tyler⁹

¹Center for Community Health and Evaluation, Seattle, Washington, USA | ²Legal Services Corporation, Washington, District of Columbia, USA | ³Kaiser Permanente, Oakland, California, USA | ⁴Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles County, Glendale, California, USA | ⁵National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership, Department of Health Policy and Management, Milken Institute School of Public Health, the George Washington University, Washington, District of Columbia, USA | ⁶HealthBegins, Pasadena, California, USA | ⁷Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Institute for Health Research, Denver, Colorado, USA | ⁸George Washington University, Washington, District of Columbia, USA | ⁹Department of Health Services, Policy and Practice, Brown University School of Public Health, Providence, Rhode Island, USA

Correspondence: Natasha Arora (natasha.b.arora@kp.org)

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Funding: This work was supported by Kaiser Permanente and East Bay Community Foundation.

Keywords: eviction prevention | healthcare training | housing | legal aid | medical-legal partnership | social determinants of health | social health

Download the Article



Camden Coalition MLP

Camden Coalition launched the MLP in 2017. The program integrates 2 full time attorneys into addiction medicine clinics to provide free, onsite legal services.

Program Objectives

Remove legal barriers to patient recovery and stability, and demonstrate the efficacy of legal services as a tool in complex care management.

Unique Features

- Embedded in person within addiction treatment clinics, with a longstanding partnership with Cooper University Health Care's Center for Healing addiction medicine program.
- Takes on both criminal and civil cases
- Recently added a Community Health Worker to our team, who acts as both a resource navigator and a paralegal

Total of **1,427 referrals** since launch. **652 referrals** from July 2024 – June 2025



RESEARCH TEAM



Led by Senator Walter Rand Institute for Public Affairs at Rutgers University-Camden, in partnership with Camden Coalition and Cooper University Health Care's Center for Healing staff. Funded by Urban Innovation Fund Grant from Rutgers University-Camden's Division of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement (DICE)

RESEARCH PURPOSE



To understand the experiences of MLP program participants served through the Camden Coalition's partnership with Cooper Center for Healing and assess how effectively the MLP is meeting participants' legal needs and supporting recovery.

STUDY DESIGN & TIMELINE



Data collection period:

January - April 2024

Program data analysis:

February 2022 - April 2024

Mixed-methods approach:

Quantitative surveys + qualitative interviews

PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT



Survey respondents:

70 of 242 eligible MLP participants (29%)

In-depth interviews:

39 MLP participants + 13 staff members

Participant pool:

Current & former MLP participants who were simultaneously Cooper Center for Healing patients

KEY MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS



Recovery capital assessment:

10-item composite scale measuring assets & resources related to recovery (0-60points)

Legal confidence scale:

6-item composite measuring legal knowledge and self-efficacy (0-36 points)

MLP support scale:

7-item composite assessing program staff assistance quality (0-42 points)

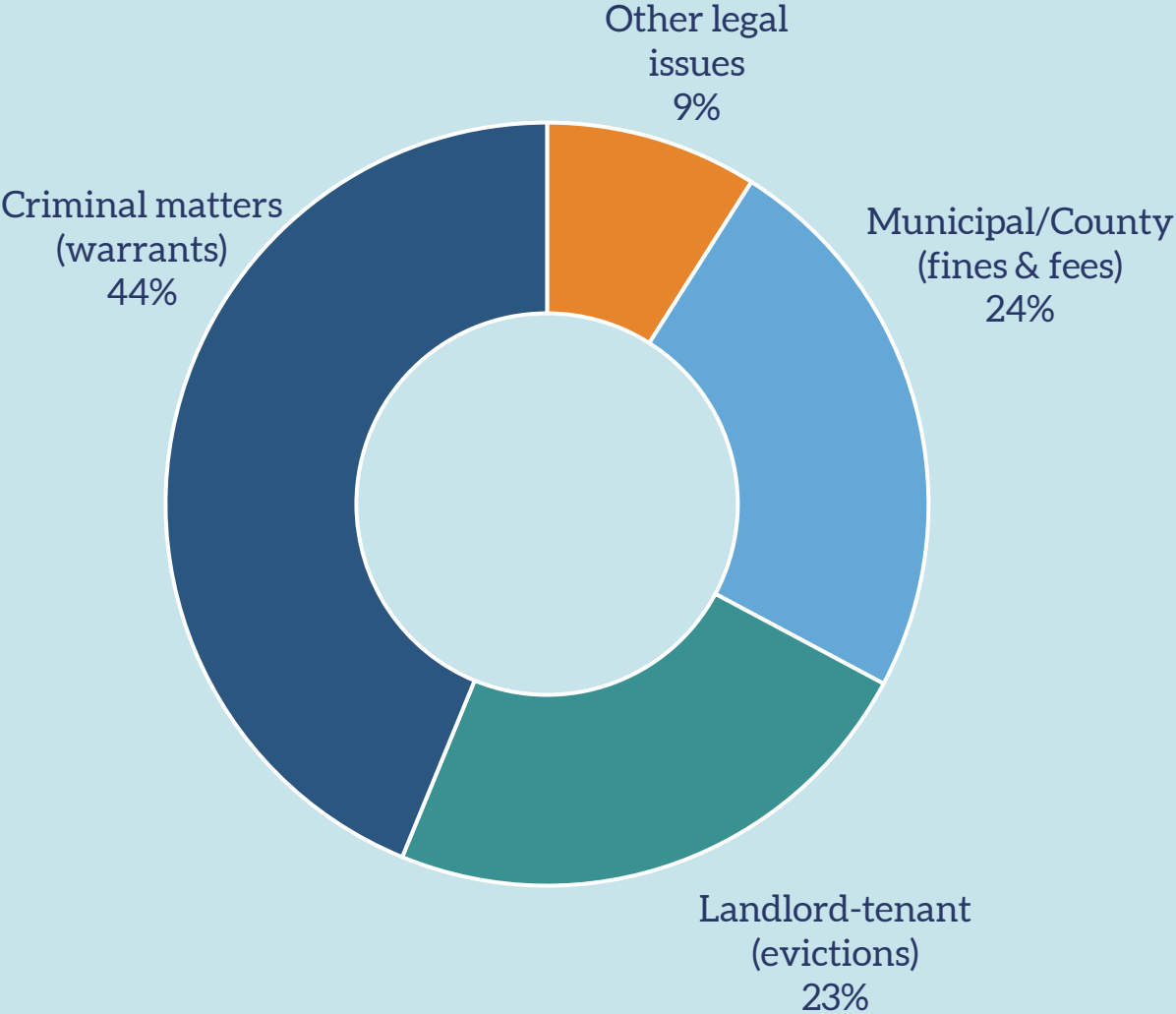
6-point Likert scale:

Used throughout (strongly disagree to strongly agree)

[Read the report](#)



Criminal matters represented the largest category of MLP cases among study participants



Flexible, efficient engagement to meet diverse needs

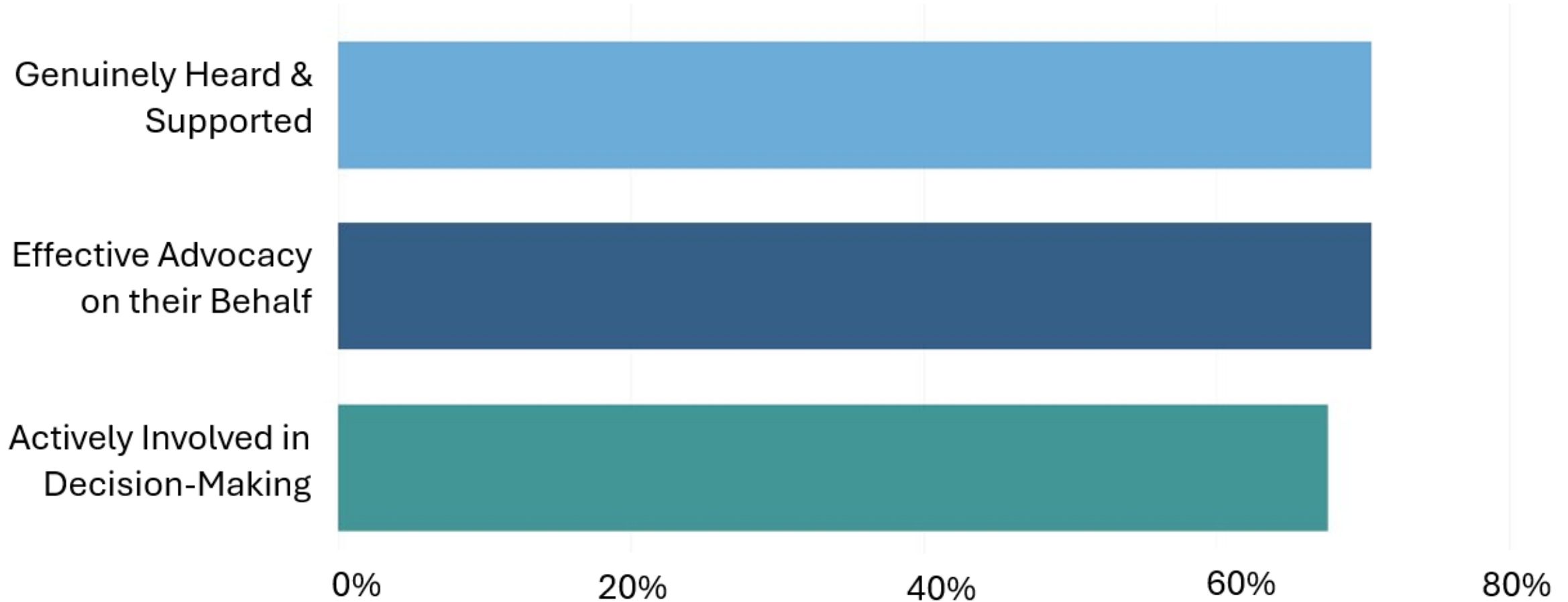
27 days
Median Resolution Time

93 days
Mean Resolution Time

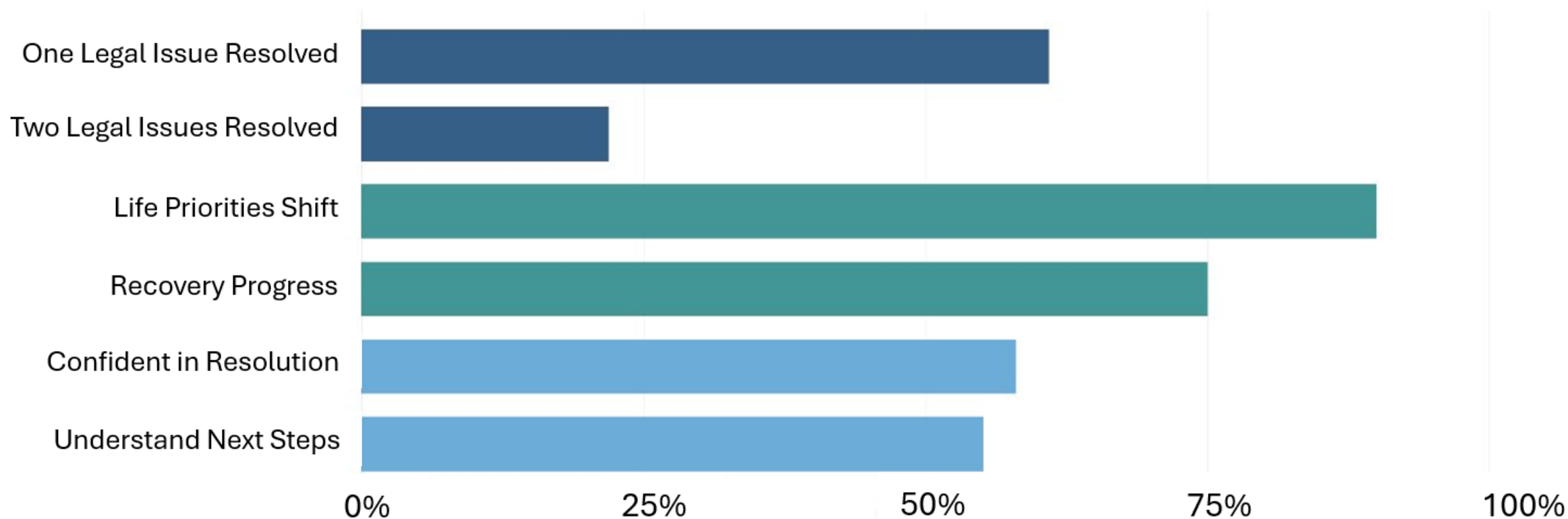
1-935 days
Engagement Range

86.8%
One Engagement Period

Strong ratings across all dimensions of person-centered care



Transforming lives through legal support



“

Just kind of everything. I mean like what made the program, [they] would call me any single time [they] had any kind of like update... and [they] had no problem answering every question I had, and just basically it was like that you can breathe again feeling. You know what I mean? So like through the whole entire process having that like I can breathe again feeling, and not have like all that stress and weight on my shoulders. Like that's all I could have even asked for with that because it was already stressful enough...

MLP Client

In their own words: Lives transformed

“

[The MLP attorney is] focusing on giving us our life back. That's all we need. Give my grandkids a fighting chance so they can go to school normally. Knowing that they got hot water... I thank God for [the MLP attorney]taking my case... [they] gave me another chance at life. That program was an inspiration and it works. It works for me.

MLP Client

In their own words: Lives transformed



Panel discussion



Putting Care at the Center 2025

PORTLAND, OR • OCT 15-17

| *Complex care: Meeting the moment*

camdenhealth.org/registration



The National Center
for Complex Health & Social Needs
An initiative of the Camden Coalition



MLP-focused content



Putting Care at
the Center 2025

PORTLAND, OR • OCT 15-17

Complex care: Meeting the moment

- **Bridging gaps: Evaluating medical-legal partnerships to address social determinants of health in underserved communities |**
University of Central Florida
- **Bridging the divide: Innovative systems to link healthcare and immigration legal services |** *Sabaii Sabaii Consulting, Stanford University, Institute for Research in the Social Sciences, Immigration Policy Lab, Innovation Law Lab, and CareOregon*
- **Real talk: Challenges and effective solutions for health system MLP implementation |** *HealthBegins, Kaiser Permanente, and Legal Aid Services of Oregon*
- **Supporting opioid use disorder treatment and recovery through medical-legal partnerships |** *Foundation For Opioid Response Efforts*



Explore all the content and register: camdenhealth.org/annual-conference

Answer in the chat

What are you most looking forward to at *Putting Care at the Center 2025*?

Contact us

National Center for Medical  Legal Partnership
AT THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Bethany Hamilton

*National Center for
Medical-Legal Partnership*

bhamilton1@gwu.edu



Marisa Conner

Kaiser Permanente

Marisa.L.Conner@kp.org



Jeremy Spiegel

Camden Coalition

jspiegel@camdenhealth.org

Dawn Wiest

Camden Coalition

dwiest@camdenhealth.org

Thank you

Learn more about the
conference and register

