

Health & Justice Through Medical-Legal Collaboration: *Addressing Health-Harming Social Issues with the ACO*



Pisgah Legal Services

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Executive Director

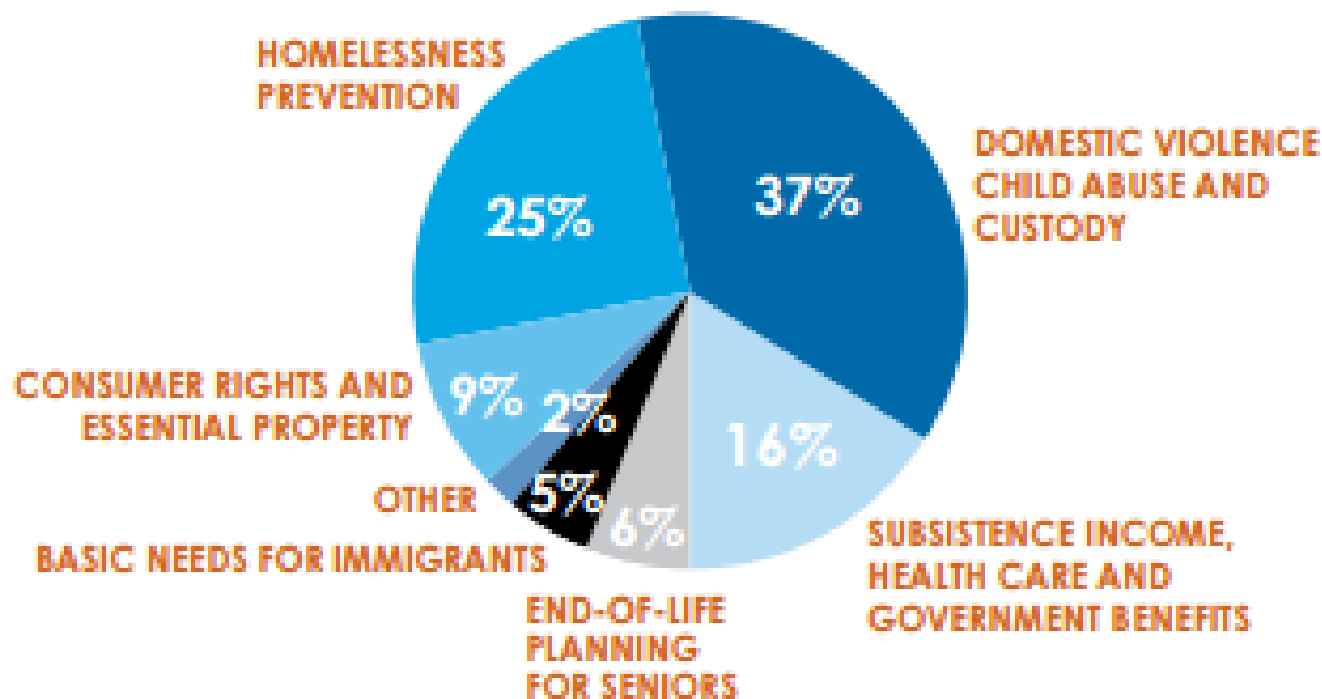
Pisgah Legal Services

- Community-based nonprofit providing **free** civil legal assistance to help low income individuals and families meet their basic needs in WNC; the legal aid safety net provider
- For 39 years we have tackled problems of poverty through **direct legal services, collaboration and policy advocacy**
- Helping 15,000+ low-income adults and children meet their basic need for food, shelter, safety, health care, and income through civil legal advocacy - annually
- Over 10,000 hours of volunteer assistance: volunteer attorneys, office volunteers, health insurance navigators



Poverty Law Areas Addressed

PERCENTAGE OF CASES CLOSED BY ISSUE AREA IN 2016



Medical Legal Partnerships (MLP)

- **Connecting services produces a documented impact:**
 - Healthier Patients
 - More Effective Health Care Teams
 - Healthier Solutions for Community
 - Health Care Cost Savings

<http://medical-legalpartnership.org/pbsnewshour/>



Service Area for 1st MLP in NC



Primary Service Area = 6 dark blue counties

Limited services in 11 WNC counties

Offices in Asheville, Brevard, Hendersonville, Marshall,
Rutherfordton

Same Catchment Area as Mission Health System



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LEGAL SERVICES

60% OF HEALTH IS
SOCIAL FACTORS

LEGAL PROBLEMS ARE
HEALTH PROBLEMS

FROM KIDS TO VETS

THE BENEFITS OF
INTEGRATED CARE



60% OF HEALTH IS SOCIAL FACTORS



Research indicates that while only 40 percent of an individual's health is determined by genetics, medical care, and personal choices, fully sixty percent of health is determined by social and environmental factors such as income, access to health care, access to enough healthy food, housing, education, job stability, and personal safety—in other words, all the things that influence an individual's well-being in the places where she is born, lives, works, and plays.

This helps explain why the United States spends far more on health care services than all other industrialized nations, but is not, relatively speaking, particularly healthy, ranking 42nd in life expectancy and 169th in low birth weight; While the U.S. spends just \$0.90 on social services for every dollar it spends on health care, countries with better health outcomes spend almost \$2 on social services for every dollar spent on health care.

Source and Credit: <http://medical-legalpartnership.org/need/>

Figure 2

Social Determinants of Health

Economic Stability	Neighborhood and Physical Environment	Education	Food	Community and Social Context	Health Care System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Employment ★ Income ★ Expenses ★ Debt ★ Medical bills Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Housing Transportation ★ Safety Parks Playgrounds Walkability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literacy Language ★ Early childhood education Vocational training ★ Higher education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Hunger Access to healthy options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Social integration Support systems ★ Community engagement ★ Discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Health coverage ★ Provider availability Provider linguistic and cultural competency Quality of care

Health Outcomes

Mortality, Morbidity, Life Expectancy, Health Care Expenditures, Health Status, Functional Limitations

Data Supporting Need for MLP

- 1 out of 6 people needs legal aid services to be healthy
- A study done in Lancaster, Pa showed that 95% of a clinic's high utilizer patients had 2-3 legal issues and MLP reduced costs by 45%
- There are 6,415 people living in poverty for every one civil legal aid attorney

Sources-

- <http://medical-legalpartnership.org/>"Medical-Legal Partnership and Health Centers: Addressing Patient's Health-Harming Civil Legal Needs as Part of Primary Care, Milken Institute School of Public Health, The George Washington University, February 2015.
- <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/our-approach>
- <http://www.lsc.gov/media-center/press-releases/2017/legal-services-corporation-brief-congress-new-justice-gap-america>



Poverty Law & Patient Health

3 Main Ways that Poverty Law and Patient Health Overlap

- **Increase resources** to help meet basic needs
- Improve and create **healthy, stable, affordable physical environments**
- Increase **personal safety**



Increasing Resources

- Helping patients meet basic needs through access to income and qualifying benefits
 - SSI Income
 - SSDI or Survivor's Benefits
 - Medicaid/Medicare/Other Health Insurance
 - Food Stamps
 - Assist with unfair debt collection practices and protecting essential income and property
 - Child Support for survivors of domestic violence
 - Subsidized housing eligibility
 - ACA Health Insurance premium tax credits
 - Work authorization for immigrants



Healthy Physical Environments

- PLS provides representation for a variety of housing issues:
 - Evictions
 - Substandard Housing Conditions
 - Subsidized Housing
 - Foreclosure
- Recent Study reveals a 1-3% vacancy rate in rental housing here in WNC (4 counties around Asheville)
- Policy

7th Annual Pisgah Legal Poverty Forum
Pulitzer Prize Winner Matthew Desmond,
Author of “EVICTED”
UNC-Asheville
Thursday, September 28th



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Increasing Personal Safety

- Helping patients increase personal safety through legal presentation and advocacy
 - Domestic Violence Protection Orders
 - Helping immigrant victims of crime access legal pathways for legal status
 - Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention through child custody
 - Divorce, separation, alimony and child support
 - Know Your Rights sessions and planning documents for immigrants and their families



Impact

- More data is now available and research shows:
 - Decrease in hospitalizations for chronically ill
 - More patients taking medications as prescribed
 - Patients reporting feeling less overall stress
 - Reduces health care costs for certain patients
 - Increase in reimbursement for clinical services

For more information and to access the journal articles see: <http://medical-legalpartnership.org/impact/>



How ACO Patients Are Referred

- **ACO case manager, trained by our staff to spot issues, opens a pathway to Pisgah Legal Services**
- **E-mail referral using Athena software**
- **Receipt of referral is confirmed across system**
- **PLS puts in brief summary of work done**
- **Closer cooperation/follow-up PRN**



For More Information

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