

# St. Peter's Health Partners Medical-Legal Partnership Program

## A Guide for Social Workers, Nurses and Medical Providers



### What is a Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP)?

It is a collaboration between providers of medical services and legal services to provide free legal services to patients with legal matters that relate to or affect their health. Legal cases may involve wills, family law matters, public benefits, disability benefits, housing matters, consumer issues, and more.

### When is a legal problem related to a patient's health?

The legal problem is related to a patient's health when the legal problem is:

- harming to the patient's health;
- aggravated by the patient's illness; or,
- an obstacle to the patient's treatment, recovery, or discharge plan.

### Who is eligible?

Patients must meet all five of the following criteria:

1. Be an inpatient or observation patient of a St. Peter's Health Partners hospital at the time of referral to the MLP. **St. Peter's Hospital serves as the pilot hospital for this program.**
2. Be in treatment for a serious medical condition.
3. Be a Medicaid recipient, eligible for Medicaid, or be eligible for financial assistance through St. Peter's Health Partners.
4. Must need one of the legal services offered by Legal Aid Society or Albany Law School Clinic and Social Justice Center.
5. The health care employee/provider believes that the patient's legal problem is related to the patient's health.

### What legal services are provided?

Examples of legal services provided include:

- Income (disability benefits, consumer issues, etc.)
- Housing (landlord/tenant, foreclosure, etc.)
- Education/Employment (FMLA rights, discrimination etc.)
- Legal Status (immigration/naturalization, etc.)
- Personal and Family Status (family law, etc.)

### What is the Process?

1. The health care employee/provider identifies an eligible patient whose legal problem is related to the patient's health.
2. The health care employee/provider asks the patient if they want a referral to speak with the attorney on site from the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York.
3. The health care employee/provider completes the referral form and HIPAA release and transmits it to the staff attorney from Legal Aid.
4. The staff attorney determines if the patient is eligible for legal services, and if so, meets with the patient to assess the case.
5. The staff attorney meets with the patient to discuss his/her legal issues, and provides advice, representation, or a referral. The referrals can be to the Albany Law School Clinic and Social Justice Center, another attorney at Legal Aid, or an appropriate outside agency.

### How to Get More Information

To provide information to patients, or obtain a referral form, visit the SPHP Intranet > Resources > Medical-Legal Partnership. If you have questions, please contact:

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