

“Legal Remedies” to Address Social Determinants of Health? A Brief Introduction to Legal Aid of North Carolina and Our Medical-Legal Partnership Program

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Wake County Medical Society Community Health Foundation
Steering Committee Meeting
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Agenda

1. **How to integrate access to “legal remedies” for social determinants of health with broader, collaborative efforts to improve patient and population?**
2. **Introduction to Legal Aid of North Carolina and Our Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) Program**
3. **Medicaid Transformation and other NC DHHS Initiatives Related to Opportunities for Health**
 - a) **Standardized screening**
 - b) **Resource Platform**
 - c) **Care Management**
 - d) **Regional Pilots**
 - e) **Data and Metrics – How to Better Align Capacity/Resources with Needs?**
4. **Current Initiatives in Wake County?**
5. **Discussion, Challenges, Next Steps?**



Health Equity*



Health equity means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires:

- Removing obstacles to health, such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences [...]
- Including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.

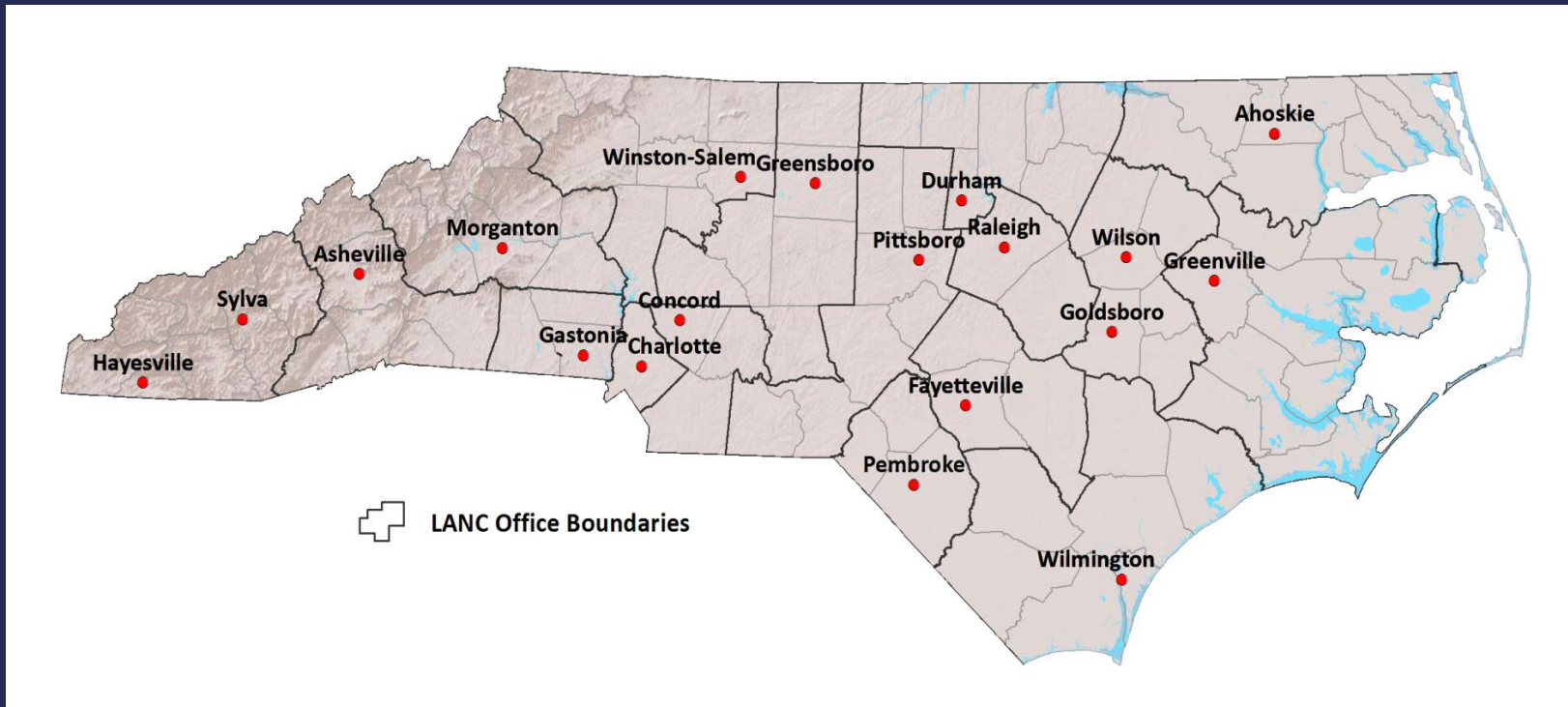
***Source: UCSF and RWJ: What Is Health Equity? And What Difference Does a Definition Make? May 2017**



Legal Aid of North Carolina

Mission

- A statewide, non-profit law firm that provides free legal assistance
- in civil matters to low-income people
- in order to ensure equal access to justice
- and to remove legal barriers to economic opportunity



Legal Aid of North Carolina



Program Areas

Housing

Domestic Violence

Public Benefits

Education

Consumer Law

Employment

Community Economic
Development

Examples of Statewide and Regional Projects

Medical-Legal Partnership Program

Domestic Violence Prevention Initiative, Battered Immigrant Project

Outreach & Enrollment for Coverage Under ACA

Farm Worker Unit, Human Trafficking Project

Advocates for Children's Services

Mortgage Foreclosure Project

Fair Housing Project

Senior Law Project

Veterans' Law Project

Community Economic Development, Disaster Relief and Recovery



Social Determinants of Health → Examples of Legal Remedies



**Access to
safe,
affordable
housing**

- Prevent or stop illegal evictions and improper terminations of housing subsidies
- Prevent mortgage foreclosure
- Ensure that repairs and services are made to unsafe rental homes
- Challenge discrimination through fair housing claims

**Personal
safety and
family
stability**

- Domestic violence protective orders
- Custody for victims and children exposed to interpersonal violence
- Immigration assistance for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and other violence

Social Determinants of Health → Examples of Legal Remedies



**Food
security**



- Appeal improper denials, terminations, reductions of SNAP/ Food Stamps

**Income
security**



- Remove barriers to employment and other services for persons with certain criminal records
- Appeal improper denials, terminations, reductions of income support programs
 - SSI for persons with disabilities
 - Veteran's benefits, discharge upgrades
 - Unemployment benefits
- Assist with certain tax matters
- Enforce consumer protection laws
- Protect children's rights to educational services

Legal Aid of North Carolina



How to Apply for Assistance?

1. Legal Aid Help Line: Statewide, toll-free numbers
 - <http://www.legalaidnc.org/get-help/Pages/apply-for-help/Apply-by-Phone.aspx>
2. On-Line applications
 - <http://www.legalaidnc.org/get-help/Pages/apply-for-help/Apply-Online.aspx>
3. Direct referrals from specific, selected community partners to local LANC offices
 - Domestic violence agencies
 - Medical-Legal Partnership clinics and hospitals

Other Information, Resources for the General Population

- See our website for know-your-rights classes, videos, written materials, other information





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- Get Health Insurance
- Our Services
- Apply Online
- Apply by Phone
- Find an Office
- Self-Help Clinics
- Self-Help Library
- Other Help
- Client Complaints

TENANT RIGHTS CLINIC

The Tenant Rights Clinic explains your rights as a tenant and what to do if your landlord will not make repairs. You will watch an instructional video and can ask general questions to a volunteer attorney. Specific advice is not provided at the clinic. You can request a callback from Legal Aid to see if you qualify for additional help. Clinics are located in many N.C. counties. If you do not see a clinic in your city or county, please check the surrounding counties in your area. If you cannot attend a clinic, you can call our Helpline at 1-866-219-5262 to see if you qualify for help. Legal Aid assists with some landlord/tenant issues. Legal Aid services are free of charge. [Read our FAQ to learn more.](#)

To Register

1. Wait for registration form to load below.
2. Click "select a date" and pick your date from the drop-down menu.
3. Find your desired location in the left column.
4. Use the 0-10 drop-down menu to the right of your location to select the number of seats you want to reserve.
5. Click the green "register" button at the bottom of the form. A new window will open.
6. Complete your registration in the new window.

Registration E



Now That You've Asked



Legal Aid of North Carolina's Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) Program



Brings together physicians, nurses, social workers, care managers, other health care professionals, attorneys, paralegals, and other community partners

To address the social and environmental conditions that influence patient and population health, including:

- Food, income, and housing insecurity;
- Improper denials of Medicaid and other public benefits;
- Substandard housing conditions;
- Domestic violence; and
- Failure to provide children with educational services to which they are entitled.





Medical-Legal Partnership: How Does It Work?

- Legal staff and clinic/hospital staff work collaboratively to:
 - enhance patient/client outcomes;
 - track outcomes, and measure impact;
 - Identify operational challenges and seek solutions; and,
 - Secure resources to ensure sustainability.

****It's not just about the screening ... or the referral... and, it's not just about a soft handoff.****



Collaboration with Community Partners



1. *Easy, right?*
2. *What are key elements of truly collaborative work?*
3. *Why (try to) do it?*





Why Engage in Collaborative Work?

Strategic relationships with community partners can improve outcomes for individual patient/clients

- With limited resources, multiple disciplinary efforts help us focus on what we do best
- Value of integrated “service delivery model”

Provides an opportunity to focus on community-level priorities and “systemic impact”

- Use existing data about locally-defined needs to align resources for most important work → “Impact Work”



Coming Soon ... !?!



- 1. Medicaid transformation and other NC DHHS Initiatives Related to Opportunities for Health**
 - a) Standardized screening**
 - b) Resource Platform**
 - c) Care Management**
 - d) Regional Pilots**
 - e) Data and Metrics – How to Better Align Resources with Needs?**
- 2. How Can We Support Initiatives in Wake County?**
- 3. Discussion, Challenges, Next Steps?**



Final Thoughts?

“Leaders are called to stand in that lonely place between the no longer and the not yet and intentionally make decisions that will bind, forge, move and create history.

We are not called to be popular, we are not called to be safe, we are not called to follow.

We are the ones called to take risks, we are the ones called to change attitudes; to risk displeasures, we are the ones called to gamble our lives for a better world.”

Mary Lou Anderson, April 1970



