

Quality and Productivity Commission
33rd Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
“Empowering Innovative Solutions”

2019 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: *Justice League: Legal Aid & Healthcare Unite*

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: APRIL 2018

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2018)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 Every day, low-income residents confront legal problems such as housing insecurity,
 2 immigration irregularities and disability benefit denials. The resulting stress may
 3 exacerbate already chronic health problems. An innovative partnership brings lawyers
 4 and health care teams together to address legal and medical needs in tandem. The
 5 Medical Legal Community Partnership-Los Angeles (MLCP-LA) is a collaboration
 6 between three non-profit law firms and the Los Angeles County Department of Health
 7 Services' Whole Person Care Program (WPC-LA). MLCP-LA's hybrid service delivery
 8 model serves thousands of residents by using county-wide Community Health Workers
 9 to connect participants to legal help through an online referral portal. Distinct from the
 10 online portal, the Martin Luther King Jr. Outpatient Center (MLK OPC) uniquely co-
 11 locates legal professionals inside the primary care clinic. In its first 14 months, the
 12 MLCP online portal served 659 patients and the MLK OPC MLCP site served another
 13 433 patients. This "Justice League" alliance of health care and legal professionals is
 14 providing critical civil legal services as part of a broader comprehensive approach to
 15 improve the health and well-being of thousands of LA County residents.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Martin Luther King, Jr-Outpatient Center 1670 East 120 th Street Los Angeles, CA 90059		TELEPHONE NUMBER 424 338 1001
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Clemens Hong, MD		TELEPHONE NUMBER 424 338 1002 EMAIL chong@dhs.lacounty.gov
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Connie Salgado-Sanchez <i>C. Salgado-Sanchez</i>	DATE 06/7/19	TELEPHONE NUMBER 213 288 8483 EMAIL cosanchez@dhs.lacounty.gov
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Christina Ghaly, MD <i>Christina Ghaly</i>	DATE 6/28/19	TELEPHONE NUMBER

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s) of the project to the County. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success and specify assessment time frame. Use Arial 12 point font.

Challenge

Currently 1.69 million people out of 9.96 million in Los Angeles County live below the poverty line. Studies show that 80 percent of these individuals suffer a civil legal problem that negatively affects their health (“Documenting the Justice Gap”, The Legal Services Corporation, 2009).

The health care system attempts to address the social factors that affect health through social work and case management services. The services, benefits and legal protections put in place to ensure economic stability, housing, and access to health care, however, are often wrongfully denied or under-enforced. When this happens—for example, when a woman loses her job because of employment discrimination, when her landlord threatens to illegally evict her from apartment or her insurance benefits are wrongly denied-- her physical and mental health often suffer. She needs more than the traditional medical team can provide because although her physical symptoms can be treated, the underlying causes of her physical symptoms are seemingly beyond her control. These problems are often rooted in civil legal needs that profoundly affect health. If left untreated, they can have debilitating effects on individual health, which in turn increase health care utilization and costs. Legal assistance is currently not a tool that health care professionals traditionally use to treat patients or address population health. However, this project demonstrates that legal assistance can actually contribute to improved health outcomes for a population that often lives in a constantly stressful state.

Solutions and Benefits

Simple in design, yet elegant in purpose, MLCP-LA’s integrate civil legal aid services alongside health care services to mitigate the most complex social conditions that may disadvantage individuals, families and communities. Linking lawyers to the health and care management teams through Medical Legal Partnerships allows all collaborating professions to provide individually tailored high quality, efficient necessary care. By training, learning, working side-by-side, and sharing data and resources, clinicians, health workers and lawyers can collectively advocate for improved policies and regulations that can ultimately improve population health.

When the MLCP-LA addresses civil legal needs as part of the health care, evidence has shown improved outcomes, such as the following:

- Patients with chronic illnesses are admitted to the hospital less frequently;
- Patients more commonly take their medications as prescribed;

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- Patients report less stress;
 - Patients avoid homelessness, reducing demand for other more expensive public services and hospital emergency room services; and
 - Public and private payers more frequently reimburse the County for clinical services.
- The MLCP at MLK is an opportunity to allow healthcare and legal professionals to identify and help patients reach their optimal health. This integration of legal assistance into patient care results in greater access to life-changing legal assistance for vulnerable individuals.

MLCP-LA allows health care and legal professionals to team up in support of patients and the community through individual participant assistance, technical assistance and training, and a collaborative approach to identifying and resolving system barriers. At the MLK OPC, in particular, this integration of legal assistance into patient care results in greater access to life-changing legal assistance. Below are examples of patients who benefitted from MLCP-LA services. Pseudonyms are used to protect privacy.

- Ofelia is a cancer patient at the MLK OPC and was residing in its adjacent Recuperative Care Center when she was referred to MLCP-LA in 2019. In 2015, when diagnosed with cervical, uterine, and breast cancers, she was unable to work and accrued credit card debt. The MLCP-LA assisted Ofelia with filing Chapter 7 bankruptcy for \$90,000 in accumulated debt. All debts from these credit cards have been discharged, and Ofelia now has a chance for a new start. In addition, Ofelia moved into permanent housing in May of 2019.
- Allan is a patient of the MLK OPC. During a period when he was comatose in late 2017 through early, 2018, his SSI disability payments were assigned to his sister as his representative payee. Allan’s sister refused to release his SSI payments to secure new housing when he recovered. MLCP-LA helped to reinstate Allan’s control of his SSI payments and restored his financial independence.
- Mary is a homeless veteran, mother, and domestic violence survivor with serious physical and mental health disabilities. In early 2018, she received a series of parking citations from the City of Bellflower totaling nearly \$1,700 — approximately eight times her monthly allowance as a General Relief recipient. The DMV placed a hold on her registration, so she could no longer legally drive her vehicle. MLCP-LA lawyers intervened with the Bellflower Public Safety Department; resulting in the prompt lifting of the DMV hold so she could register her car and drive it legally.
- Katrina is an MLK OPC patient who moved from El Salvador to Los Angeles to escape sexual violence she suffered in her home country. Katrina was referred by her medical provider to apply for a “green card.” MLCP-LA lawyers identified Katrina’s eligibility to file for a U-Visa and her son’s eligibility to petition for a green card. Additionally, MLCP-LA advocates recognized that she was eligible for federal

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and State-funded Medi-Cal. Katrina now has access to dental care and the full range of all medically necessary services.

- Alice is an 80-year-old MLK OPC patient who arrived at MLK OPC with badly shaking hands. She pays \$1300 for rent from her modest Social Security income. She explained to the MLK OPC community health worker that she was not able to take her prescribed Primidone (for seizure disorders) because she could not afford the co-pay. The community worker connected her with an MLCP-LA advocate who worked with Alice to switch her Medicare health plan and dramatically reduce her out-of-pocket pharmacy costs. Alice is now taking her prescribed medications, reducing her risk for a major seizure and her hands have stopped shaking.

MLCP-LA Data Snapshot - First 14 Months of Service Delivery:

- Total 1,092 Participant Referrals: Via Online Portal - 659 | Via MLK OPC - 433
- MLCP-LA: Top Justice Barriers identified by patients
 - a. Housing – 21%
 - b. Income Maintenance (Public Benefits) - 19%
 - c. Individual Rights, including Immigration -19%
 - d. Health – 13%
 - e. Family Law – 11%
- 998 successful case and technical assistance outcomes
- *Fast Compassionate Service*: 88% of patients are called within one day or less of a referral.

Financial Impact: While data as to financial benefits to enrollees as a result of MLCP-LA intervention is still preliminary, initial estimates project a combined cost savings / expense reduction of nearly \$83,000.00. Cost avoidance reflects fees or debts waived for clients, on a monthly or lump sum basis. Recovered funds reflect income or benefits recovered or awards resulting from litigation, again on either a monthly or lump sum basis. This amount is likely an underestimate.

Financial Recovery	Consumer/Finance	Housing	Income Maintenance	Miscellaneous Benefits	Grand Total
Lump Sum Avoidance	\$7,887.23	\$31,890.12	\$36,630.00	\$939.00	\$77,346.35
Lump Sum Recovery			\$943.00		\$943.00
Monthly Avoidance	\$8.00	\$1,500.00	\$600.00		\$2,108.00
Monthly Recovery		\$1,172.70	\$1,404.00		\$2,576.70
Total	\$7,895.23	\$34,562.82	\$39,577.00	\$939.00	\$82,974.05

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Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only. Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12 point font.

The MLCP-LA approach helps to accomplish the County’s Strategic Plan Goal I. to Make Investments That Transform Lives. Under that goal, the County seeks to “aggressively address society’s most complicated social, health, and public safety challenges...[and to] be a highly responsive organization capable of responding to complex societal challenges – one person at a time.” Strategy I.1 – Increase Our Focus on Prevention Initiatives seeks “to increase our residents’ self-sufficiency and prevent long term-reliance on the County’s social safety net....” The MLCP-LA project offers a unique missing service to address the broad range of complex problems that make our residents sick with worry. Legal advocates and doctors work in tandem to enforce consumer and other legal protections to restore fairness, dignity, self-determination and self-reliance for our sickest and most vulnerable residents.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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