

The Community Advocacy Program (CAP), a medical-legal partnership between Legal Aid and MetroHealth, improves health outcomes for low-income vulnerable individuals and families including children, immigrants, individuals who are limited English proficient, and the elderly. CAP pairs legal and medical professionals to improve community health. Doctors, nurses, social workers, and other providers from The MetroHealth System team with lawyers and a paralegal from The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland to overcome legal barriers to patient health. CAP accepts referrals from Main Campus pediatrics, the new Ohio City Health Center, Broadway, Buckeye, the School Health Program, and for Medicare ACO patients. MetroHealth providers at other sites may refer patients to Legal Aid at 1.888.817.3777.

Making A Referral In EPIC

- If you are at a site with a CAP attorney, make a referral by:
1. In the EPIC Order screen, search for “CAP101” or “Legal”
 2. Select “Referral to the Community Advocacy Program”
 3. Click on “Consultation”
 4. Go to “Schedule Instructions”
(you will have to scroll down to get to this box)
 5. Press F2 and choose the applicable drop-downs
 6. When the order prints out, please show the patient the CAP referral and circle the CAP contact phone number for the patient to call.



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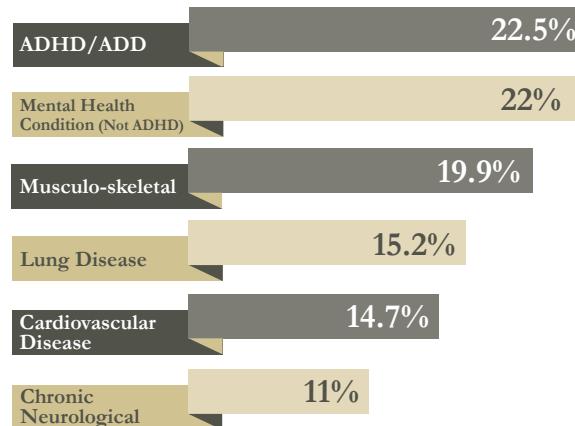
Community Advocacy Program: A Medical-Legal Partnership Legal Help for MetroHealth Patients



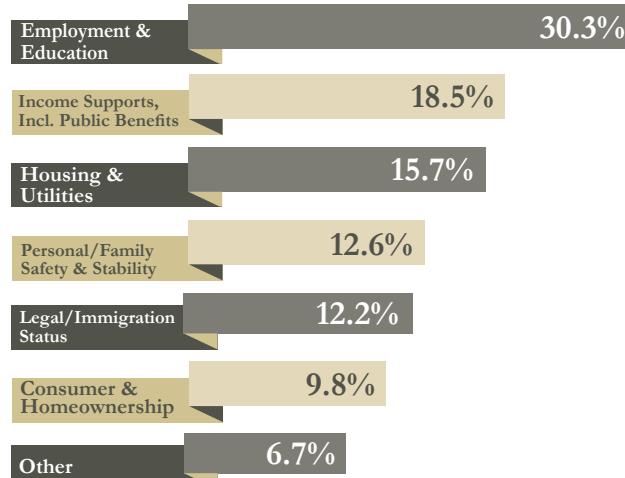
Patients Served

In 2019, the CAP medical-legal partnership between MetroHealth and Legal Aid provided legal assistance to 766 household members through brief advice or extended legal representation. In 2020, Legal Aid attorneys continue to serve MetroHealth patients remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

75.2% of patient-clients had one or more chronic health problems. Among those with chronic health problems, the most common problems were:



The legal assistance Legal Aid provided to patient-clients covered a wide variety of legal issues, as detailed below:



Provider Trainings

The Legal Aid CAP team presented more than 33 trainings for medical providers in 2019 on topics such as housing, utilities, bullying, special education, school discipline, immigration, and public benefits. CAP also held 45 one-on-one meetings with pediatric and psychology medical residents to train them on helping patients overcome legal barriers to health. “Curbside consults” – brief one-on-one sessions with medical providers designed to guide and empower them to effectively advocate for their patients – occurred 129 times in 2019. Additionally, MetroHealth providers created 583 advocacy letters using the CAP letter templates in Epic.

Public Charge Education Campaign

Recently, the Department of Homeland Security released their new rule on the public charge inadmissibility ground [reason for which a person might not be allowed to emigrate to the U.S. or become a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR)]. Public charge applies to certain categories of immigrants who receive public benefits, but it does NOT apply to all immigrants.

For example: U.S. citizen children's use of public benefits will NOT negatively affect their immigrant parent's immigration case, if the parent did not receive the benefit. Some immigrants who are exempt from public charge include the following: U-visa [victims of crime] holders; T-visa [victims of human trafficking] holders; those with VAWA [victims of domestic violence] status; children with Special Immigrant Juvenile Status; asylee/refugees (people fleeing persecution in their home countries); and LPR's applying for U.S. citizenship. If you have questions about public charge, or are interested in a public charge presentation, please reach out to the CAP Legal Aid attorney at your MetroHealth site.

Example Case Studies

Restoring Homecare Provider Services

The CAP Legal Aid attorney embedded in MetroHealth's ACO assisted a patient referred from Old Brooklyn in fighting a reduction in her homecare services. The patient is an elderly woman living with osteoarthritis, a damaged spinal cord, glaucoma, and heat edema. Due to her needs, she receives healthcare from a homecare provider. Her caregiver hours were reduced from 50 hours a week to 40 hours without basis. CAP appealed the decision with the Ohio Bureau of State Hearings. CAP argued that there was no evidence to demonstrate that the patient's health had improved enough to justify a cut. The hearing officer agreed. Now, the patient is receiving 50 hours of essential home assistance.

Improving Educational Services

A main campus pediatrician referred a family to Legal Aid's CAP for help to improve a child's educational services. The student has an emotional disability and a reading learning disorder. He was constantly being sent to the school office due to his behavior, and he was failing. The CAP attorney advocated for changes to the child's individualized education program (IEP) to better address the student's behavioral and academic needs, which included a move to a smaller classroom with more specialized assistance, social emotional services, more appropriate reading services, and occupational therapy. This student is now earning good grades, is using appropriate coping strategies, and serves as a math helper to his peers!

Immigration Barrier Removed

A Legal Aid CAP attorney represented a patient who was referred by the McCafferty social worker in order to address the patient's personal safety and immigration status. The patient is an immigrant who was being sexually abused by her husband on an almost daily basis. CAP helped her to obtain a divorce from her abusive husband. CAP also represented her in a VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) petition to U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services. Her VAWA petition was approved. She is now a Lawful Permanent Resident (has her green card), and she will be eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship in a few years.