HEAL at Community Legal Aid

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Practicum Background

Where: Community Legal Aid Services of Akron
Address: 50 S Main St # 800, Akron, OH 44308
What: Project HEAL: A Community Legal Aid's project that seeks to find solutions to non-medical barriers that keep people from being healthy. To do so, project staff, and myself, provide holistic legal services to address the social determinants of health in each client’s life.

Population

HEAL clients are adults with underlying health needs—behavioral and otherwise. Each MLP connected with the HEAL works with specific population. I worked mainly with Pathways HUB which works with pregnant women with Medicaid coverage. All MLP clients are 200% below the poverty line and are at least 18 years old (or the guardian of a child under 18 years old).

Clients most often need legal services to address: 1. Housing and eviction issues; 2. Unsafe housing conditions such as mold, pests, etc; 3. Unemployment, worker’s compensation, or eviction issues; 2. Unsafe housing conditions such as mold, pests, etc; 3. Unemployment, worker’s compensation, or eviction issues; 4. family concerns such as domestic violence or divorce; and 5. criminal record expulsions.

Learning Objectives

1. Analyze current state and federal health-law regulations which requires analyzing and conducting legal and policy research.
2. Create and develop resources and materials for parents and non-legal advocates to use to navigate MLP policies.
3. Conduct factual investigations including interviewing clients; requesting and reviewing medical, school, and other records; searching public records, etc.

Activities

1. Attended weekly meetings
2. Attended many trainings and public health discussions
3. Reviewed and checked cases for community meetings with Pathways HUB medical-legal partnership
4. Reported training lessons to my supervisor
5. Worked on assignments
6. Interviewed Clients
7. Conducted daily legal and policy research

Deliverables

Policy Proposal

1. Research Papers addressing an assigned public health issue facing HEAL clients...

MLP Policy and Processes

- As assigned, made resources for MLP partners to use when referring clients to CLA for legal services

Legal Memos

- I wrote legal memos for cases in which I was assigned. Utilized legal and policy research.

Pathways HUB

“The HUB reduces barriers that can prevent women in the Mahoning Valley who are at risk of poor birth outcomes from having healthy pregnancies and healthy babies. It partners with local care coordination agencies to connect women to resources and services that can benefit them and their baby throughout pregnancy.

The HUB coordinates and monitors services through a community-wide strategy. This team approach uses a web-based data entry and reporting system to reach those at greatest need while reducing duplication of services. Through the implementation of Pathways and its Network of Care, the HUB is able to inform that clients are connected to evidence-based care and best practices and it measures the results.”

Deliverables

- Figure 1—Logos: These three figures are the logos of the three organizations that are affiliated with Case Western Reserve University, School of Medicine, Department of Population and Quantitative Health Sciences, and Community Legal Aid.

- Figure 3—MLP flow charts: These three flow charts are examples of charts that I created to help MLP partners and Community Health Workers understand if the client is a good candidate for Legal Aid Services.

Public Health Implications

Medical-Legal Partnerships are a critical service in the public health space. Although they are not perfect and still face policy barriers, they provide a path for healthcare providers to address social determinants of health greatly affecting their patient’s stress levels and other health concerns.

Acknowledgements

Marie Curry, Clinton Household, Kimberly Adams and my co-intern, Christine DiSibato.

References

http://www.mahoninghealth.org/mahoning-county-pathways-hub/locations
https://www.communitylegalaid.org/HEAL#:~:text=The%20HEAL%20Project%20supports%20Community,keep%20people%20from%20being%20sick&language=en