

Civil Legal Aid in Health Care

Massachusetts
Legal
Assistance
Corporation
Line item 0321-1600

Legal aid lawyers help low-income people have access to health care by:

- Identifying and correcting errors that jeopardize access to treatment
- Addressing the improper denial, termination, or reduction of public health benefits
- Appealing denial of coverage for life-sustaining medications or procedures
- Advocating for the rights of children, immigrants, asylum seekers, older adults, people with mental illness, and others so that they can make the best medical decisions for themselves and their families

Low-income people at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$32,750 per year for a family of four) qualify for civil legal aid.



“I didn’t choose to be sick.”

- Daniele, who lost her job and health insurance while receiving cancer treatment. A legal aid lawyer helped her get her job and insurance back.

619 Health Cases closed in FY19, including:

MassHealth	269
Medicare	171
Private Health Insurance, Drug Treatment, Detox, and other cases	101
Long-term Health Care, Home and Community-Based Care	48
State and Local Health	30

Last year
legal aid provided
\$69 million
in economic benefits to
the Commonwealth and
its residents, including
\$8.5 million
in health care benefits

Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation
18 Tremont St., Suite 1010
Boston, Massachusetts 02108
617-367-8544

Lynne Parker
MLAC
lparker@mlac.org
617-391-5640

Elaine O’Reilly | Mary Ann Walsh
Governmental Strategies
eoreilly@governmentalstrategies.com | 617-447-5174
mawalsh@governmentalstrategies.com | 617-447-3711



In medical-legal partnerships, legal aid lawyers can “identify problems that patients present to their doctors... that can’t be solved with a prescription pad.”

- Faye Rachlin, Community Legal Aid

Medical-Legal Partnerships

Medical-legal partnerships place civil legal aid attorneys at hospitals, clinics, and community health centers to work alongside medical professionals and help address the root causes of an illness that a doctor alone might not be able to fix. For example, while a doctor can treat the symptoms of a child’s breathing problems caused by mold in their apartment, a legal aid lawyer can help ensure the landlord complies with public health and safety laws and regulations so that the child has a healthy place to live. Working in medical institutions also makes medical-legal partnership attorneys easily accessible to patients who seek help with other civil legal issues.

Medical-legal partnerships are an important part of the Commonwealth’s response to the opioid epidemic, which creates many medical and legal challenges. Civil legal aid attorneys in a medical setting can work to address barriers to health care, housing, and employment, which can help individuals with substance-use disorders find stability to sustain recovery.