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.
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.