

i. Executive Summary

The Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers (Camden Coalition) respectfully requests your consideration of a \$50,000 grant in support of our Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) which expects to serve clients that are approximately 30% 60 or over. Camden residents experience significant rates of asthma, obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and other life-threatening or life-compromising diseases. The law frequently impacts the lives of low-income residents who have limited access to free or affordable legal services. To better address health-related social barriers for community members with complex care needs, the Camden Coalition partnered with Rutgers Law School – Camden and the Center for Healing at Cooper University Hospital to form a medical-legal partnership which joins attorneys with care team members to address whole person wellbeing. Our care team works closely with consulting attorneys to assess a patient’s legal needs and access legal guidance to address these challenging issues. MLP attorneys handle legal issues such as evictions, utility shut-offs, benefits appeals, and family law difficulties, while the care team provides healthcare support including care coordination, medication management, and appointment attendance.

ii. Project details

1. Amount of grant request

The Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers respectfully requests your consideration of a \$50,000 grant in support of our Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP). A grant from the Friends Foundation for the Aging would be used to support low income older adults with legal barriers to health; specifically, costs associated with the legal side of the MLP. We can ensure that funds will serve aging adults because our request is approximately 18% of the program’s budget which is less than the percentage of adults aged 60 or over (approximately 30%) that we expect to serve during the grant period.

2. What is the problem you have identified? Who will be served?

A substantial portion of Camden residents - over 42% - are low-income, and health indicators in the city are grim, with significant rates of asthma, obesity, diabetes, and high blood pressure. These medical needs are often substantial, and the law frequently impacts their lives as they face evictions, warrants for outstanding fines, struggles obtaining necessary government benefits, and more. Better access to legal services alleviates the psychological and financial stress of legal issues, and allows patients to focus on their health. Through serving our care management patients over time, we identified a gap in access to services to address legal barriers—evictions, utilities shut-offs, fines and fees, etc.—which cause further stress and insecurity for patients already struggling with complex needs.

The MLP serves Camden-area residents enrolled in our care management programs, patients referred through the Accountable Health Communities initiative, and patients from the Center for Healing at Cooper University Hospital. The program serves low-income adults of all ages, races, and ethnicities; however, 21% of those we have served are aged 60+ and the majority of patients served are Black and/or Hispanic/Latinx. With the reintroduction of our Camden Core Model care management initiative, we expect the percentage of individuals 60+ to increase to approximately 30% of those served.

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For example, a 60-year-old MLP client with diabetes became unable to work as a result of deteriorating vision. This Spanish-speaking client was being denied disability insurance payments by his employer (a national grocery chain), despite having worked there full-time for over a decade. The MLP intervened, engaged with attorneys for the employer, and obtained the client's full disability insurance payments.

In another matter, a 65-year-old client had suffered deteriorating mental health when his wife was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor. The patient and his wife did not keep up with paying rent while she underwent treatment, and the landlord obtained a judgment for eviction against the patient – who had been hospitalized for his own mental health care. The MLP intervened, put a stop to the eviction, and negotiated a resolution with the landlord. The care team obtained rental assistance to ensure that the settlement terms would be met and the patient was able to transition seamlessly from his inpatient facility back into his apartment.

3. What is the solution you propose to address the problem?

To better address health-related social barriers for community members with complex care needs, the Camden Coalition partnered with Rutgers Law School – Camden and the Center for Healing at Cooper University Hospital to form a medical-legal partnership. The MLP addresses legal issues — a threatened eviction, a benefits denial, a utility shut-off — that undermine a patient's health and wellbeing and can be better met through the legal system. The MLP seeks to eliminate legal barriers to health and wellbeing and to improve quality of life, increase community and family stability, and increase the quality of physical and mental health for the individuals we serve.

A medical legal partnership is the model of joining attorneys with care team members to address whole person wellbeing. Our care team, including nurses, social workers, and community health workers, works closely with consulting attorneys to assess a patient's legal needs and provide legal guidance to address these challenging issues. MLP attorneys handle legal issues such as evictions, utility shut-offs, benefits appeals, and family law difficulties for individuals referred to the program. The care team provides individuals with health support including care coordination, medication management, and appointment attendance.

4. What actions will you take?

MLP attorneys engage with Camden Coalition patients, as well as patients referred through the Accountable Health Communities program and the Center for Healing. In some cases, attorneys are able to resolve legal issues through consultation and advice. In other situations, our attorneys are formally retained and provide all legal assistance required to pursue the stated client objective including court appearances, legal briefing, negotiations, client counseling, and various other elements. Finally, in certain cases our attorneys refer clients to other counsel with particular expertise or capacity. Additional activities include data collection, evaluation, securing funding, and maintaining partnerships.

A unique aspect of our MLP is that the attorneys work closely with Camden Coalition care team members to address legal issues. Attorneys train care team members to identify possible legal issues for further evaluation. In some cases, care team members are able to advocate for patients with the support and guidance of our attorneys. The care team holds the primary relationship with the patient, and the consulting attorney joins the care team for scheduled visits in the community, eliminating logistical challenges and enabling immediate focus on legal issues. Care team staff is able to follow up

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with patients on legal issues or gather additional information and documentation needed in order to maximize the attorney's time. MLP attorneys also consult directly with other staff to build legal knowledge across the team to better serve all patients.

The MLP, together with the Camden Coalition policy team, also works to translate our on-the-ground legal work into policy reforms and improvements. To date we have focused on municipal court fine/fee reform; education regarding medication-assisted treatment for substance use disorder; and policies to prevent eviction. This policy advocacy work includes writing policy briefs, conducting training sessions, and drawing attention to issues through letters and legal briefs.

Services are provided at the Camden Coalition office; at Cooper's Center for Healing clinic; in the community -- including at the homes of our clients; in court (both in-person and virtual); and using all forms of technology that allow us to engage with our clients and other relevant parties.

5. Do you have other partners for implementation or funding?

Collaboration across organizations and sectors is central to the Camden Coalition's approach. We operate our MLP in collaboration with Rutgers Law School-Camden, which provides strategic guidance as well as research and administrative support through their legal clinical program, including subject matter expertise and consultation, as well as legal research subscriptions, use of law clinic space, and access to law library resources and librarians. In addition, Rutgers clinics serve as a referral outlet for appropriate matters.

Beyond working with the Camden Coalition's panel of individuals with complex health and social needs, we have partnered with the Cooper Center for Healing, a program offering an integrative approach in providing patients access to pain, addiction, and behavioral health care in a variety of entrance points based on each individual need. A new fellowship this year has provided capacity for the MLP to serve referrals from the Center for Healing.

The MLP regularly pursues funding from foundation and government sources. We are in the second year of a three-year grant from Holman Enterprises and receive grant support from Santander and the Sozosei Foundation. The MLP also secures support from fellowship programs. As part of the Maida Public Interest Fellowships Program, a 2020 Rutgers Law graduate, Landon Hacker, has joined the MLP team to provide legal services to Center for Healing patients, as well as to support the MLP in their broader mission of supporting Camden Coalition patients. Previously the program was supported by a fellow from the prestigious Equal Justice Works program.

In addition, Rutgers Law School - Camden and the Camden Coalition provide substantial in-kind support, and the Center for Healing is actively pursuing funding for the MLP. The MLP also receives support from the Rutgers-Rowan Board of Governors.

6. How will you know your actions are having an impact?

The MLP seeks to eliminate legal barriers to health and wellbeing and to improve quality of life, increase community and family stability, and increase the quality of physical and mental health for the individuals we serve. Success for individual legal outcomes is highly specific to the type of legal issue addressed and can be difficult to quantify in many circumstances. For example, if a client is facing eviction, the goal is to

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use legal strategies to avoid the eviction and we will know that the MLP had the desired impact when the client remains in stable housing.

The MLP tracks the overall type of issue encountered, and denotes quantitative and qualitative outcomes as applicable. For example, the MLP will achieve a reduction in \$1500 of outstanding fines and fees for a client, which has a clear monetary value and also represents a significant reduction in stress on account of reduced financial and court obligations. One additional measure tracked is the number of individuals served. The MLP collaborates with the Camden Coalition's internal Data and Quality Improvement team to collect implementation and outcomes data. Additional data used to evaluate the program includes administrative records from our Health Information Exchange, Medicaid claims data, follow-up with patients throughout the intervention, and longer-term survey follow-up.

7. Brief statement of organization history and competence for this project

Created in 2002, the Camden Coalition of Healthcare Providers works to improve care for people with complex health and social needs by providing person-centered care management programs and piloting new models that address chronic illness and social barriers (i.e. housing, legal issues, behavioral health, polypharmacy, substance use) to health and wellbeing. Supported by a robust data infrastructure, our cross-sector convening expertise, and shared learning initiatives, our community-based programs are part of our ecosystem approach to providing better care to people with complex health and social needs.

Across three broad areas—[Care Interventions](#), [Connecting Data](#), and [Coalition Building](#)—we engage community stakeholders in the development of culturally appropriate, community-driven health promotion initiatives. Our flagship [Camden Core Model](#) provides patient-centered, trauma-informed care that improves patients' ability to manage their chronic health conditions, navigate the fragmented healthcare and social services systems, and achieve their individual goals for well-being. We identify patients with frequent hospital or emergency department admissions using real-time data from our [Community and Health Information Exchange \(CHIE\)](#), and staff members meet patients to offer our care coordination services. Enrolled patients receive a customized care plan and work with a community-based team of nurses, social workers, and community health workers. The team accompanies patients to appointments and links them to resources, including primary care, transportation, housing, legal services, reentry support, drug rehabilitation, and other wrap-around services.

Beyond our patient-facing work, we help providers transform how they identify and engage with vulnerable patients, and we convene local, state, and national stakeholders to advocate for changes in policy and practice. In 2016 we launched the [National Center for Complex Health and Social Needs](#), through which we work to coalesce the emerging field of complex care by bringing together a broad range of clinicians, researchers, policymakers, and consumers who are developing, testing, and scaling new models of team-based, integrated care.

iii. Please also address how your organization is addressing DEI and how the project aligns with FFA values

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is a Camden Coalition core value which we define as honoring the inherent value of every individual's unique experience, recognizing the inequalities of power, privilege, and prejudice that shape our current systems, and addressing exclusionary and unjust practices. This core value is at the center of our work including hiring, our DEI Committee, regular DEI staff training opportunities, our commitment to building authentic healing relationships with those we serve through person-centered, trauma-informed care, and our Community Advisory Committee that advises the Board of Trustees on consumer and community health needs. The DEI Committee develops training, education and support opportunities to create a safe and equitable workplace. It provides guidance to the Camden Coalition on workplace practices and policies to ensure a DEI lens is incorporated, and supports the organization in creating DEI goals and metrics for its internal practices and external work. We also developed a DEI statement which can be found on our website.

The MLP's work aligns strongly with the Friends Foundation for the Aging's values. The program serves diverse populations, seeks to affect change on both individual and systemic levels, integrates services, and leverages partnerships and other resources. Specifically, the MLP is a collaboration that integrates legal services with health and social services, leverages the resources and capacities of its partners, and engages staff at all levels to deliver legal services. Additionally, community members, including current and past care management clients, participate in the Camden Coalition's Community Advisory Committee which helps to guide the strategic direction of the organization by advising the Board of Trustees on consumer and community health needs.

iv. Include a program budget

Expense	Amount
Personnel/Salaries	\$100,141.56
Contracted services (consulting attorney, legal intern)	\$95,850
Software/equipment	\$26,844
Insurance/Office supplies/Travel/Other	\$11,935
Patient costs (court filing fees, postage, certified mail)	\$2,000
Indirect costs (20%)	\$47,354.11
Total	\$284,124.67