

1. Executive Summary

The Camden Coalition is requesting a continuing support grant of \$35,000 to support our Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP), which provides free legal services to patients with complex needs who participate in our care management programs and partnerships, approximately 32% of whom are over 50 and 10% over 60. 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 embeds attorneys in our community-based care team 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 matters while the care team provides healthcare support including care coordination, medication management, and accompaniment to appointments.

2. Identified Problem

The problem we are seeking to address has not changed from our prior proposal. Legal issues—evictions, utilities shut-offs, court fines and fees, outstanding warrants, etc.—continue to be a significant barrier to health and wellness for our patients, all of whom are low-income or living in poverty and have multiple chronic health conditions and diverse social needs (e.g., housing or food insecurity, social isolation, polypharmacy, etc.). For these individuals, legal challenges can cause intense psychological and financial stress that can divert them from focusing on their health and contribute to the documented lower life expectancies of Camden residents. We actually expect even more demand for MLP services over the coming months and years, as the federal public health emergency ends on May 11, 2023, state governments “unwind” pandemic-related expanded Medicaid and other public benefits access, and evictions continue to increase in frequency and speed.

3. Our Solution and Goals

Our solution and goals have not changed over the past year. 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. In some cases, our consulting attorneys are able to resolve legal issues through consultation and advice. In other situations, they 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.

Since July 2023, we have offered MLP services to 132 patients, while also seeking to further expand our capacity overall. We were fortunate that our Maida Public Interest Fellow, Landon Hacker, was approved to stay on our team for a second year (January-December 2023) to continue supporting patients with substance use disorder seen at the Cooper Center for Healing. Additionally, we are pursuing the possibility of adding additional legal fellow support to support the MLP in further expanding its capacity at a time of increasing need.

4. Implementation and Funding Partners

Our program implementation partners—Rutgers Law-Camden and the Cooper Center for Healing—will remain the same for the foreseeable future. Rutgers Law-Camden continues to provide 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. Our partnership with the Center for Healing, a program offering an integrative approach to providing pain, addiction, and behavioral health care based on each individual’s needs, will also continue and expand in the coming year, thanks to the Maida Fellowship extension.

On the funding side, some changes are on the horizon. Our three-year grant from Holman Enterprises comes to an end in December 2023, and we do not currently know if we will continue to receive funding from them going forward. Also, our Sozosei Foundation grant will not be reupped when it concludes in June 2023, though there may be a chance to apply for further funding in the fall or winter. As we look ahead to the 12 months following the end of our current FFA grant period—July 2023-June 2024—we are facing more uncertainty about the financial trajectory of the MLP than we have in prior years.

5. Impact Monitoring and Measurement

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. The MLP collaborates with the Camden Coalition’s internal Data and Quality Improvement team to collect implementation and outcomes data. We track the number of patients engaged and the types of issues encountered, and we seek to denote quantitative and qualitative outcomes as applicable. 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.

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 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. For each patient we work with, we capture detailed notes about their background, current situation and needs, and the legal matters the patient is seeking to resolve. We are able to periodically review this information to see if we are improving individual cases as well as to identify any trends in the types of legal matters or barriers encountered by our patients.

In the coming months, we will be launching an evaluation of our MLP work at Cooper’s Center for Healing. We hope that this rigorous evaluation will capture the benefits of our legal intervention and provide strong support for our objective of making legal services “standard of care” for treatment of substance use disorders.

6. Sustainability

The MLP regularly pursues funding from foundation and government sources, and especially as we are coming to the end of a three-year grant from Holman Enterprises, we will be redoubling our efforts to secure funding for the MLP from January 2024 onwards. Given the importance of resolving legal issues

as part of our whole-person, trauma-informed care management approach for individuals with complex health and social needs, the Camden Coalition is committed to sustaining the activity of the MLP as part of the standard of care. To that end, we will also continue to leverage our status as a state-designated Regional Health Hub in New Jersey to share our results and findings with the state Office of Medicaid Innovation and advocate for changes to policy and funding decisions that can best support this standard of care.

7. Alignment 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 FFA's values in that 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.

8. Program budget with projected income (including other sources) and expenses

Expense	Annual Budget (July 2023-June 2024)	FFA reup request (July 2023-June 2024)	Holman Y3 (ends 12/31/23)	Rutgers Maida Fellowship Y2 (ends 12/31/23)	Santander Y3 (ends 11/30/23)	To be raised
Personnel: salaries and fringe	\$185,826		\$40,767	\$26,829		\$118,231
Consulting Attorney: Jeremy Spiegel, Esq	\$118,300	\$25,000	\$36,000		\$9,200	\$48,100
Legal intern	\$3,000					\$3,000
Malpractice insurance: Maida Fellow	\$6,000					\$6,000
Meeting costs	\$6,750					\$6,750
Patient costs	\$9,500					\$9,500
Office supplies	\$500					\$500
Mobile telephones	\$960					\$960
TrackVia care management software	\$26,512	\$10,000				\$16,512
Indirect costs (34.3%)	\$122,571		\$26,331			\$96,239
TOTAL	\$479,919	\$35,000	\$103,098	\$26,829	\$9,200	\$305,792