Kansas Legal Services - Medical-Legal Partnership with Children's Mercy Hospital

In August, 2009, the Kansas-Focused Medical-Legal Partnership for was implemented in partnership with Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Kansas, funded by the Greater Kansas City Health Care Foundation. KLS staff provide legal assistance to persons using the health center' services who are referred by a medical staff member.

The relationship between poverty and ill-health is many times bi-directional: poverty contributes to ill health and ill health contributes to poverty. Individuals and families must have their basic needs met in order to be healthy and achieve their potential. When basic needs are not met, poor health outcomes occur.

Health is dependent on the social well-being of the family -- and many times health relies on legal along with medical remedies. For example, a child may have asthma that is exacerbated by moldy walls in a house. KLS staff working with a landlord to clean up the problem will positively affect the child's health.

The medical-legal partnerships rely on the collaboration between health care professionals and legal staff. Healthcare staff is trained to screen clients for possible legal issues and refer clients to legal staff. Legal issues may be as simple as advice or more complex, such as representation.

Read more about medical-legal partnerships flourishing across the country at the website for the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnerships.

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