

Background & Proposed Project:

After spending the first year of my undergraduate experience in the anxiety-invoking “undeclared” category, I was thrilled to discover a way to narrow my ever-expanding career interests. When confronted with the dilemma of deciding if I was more inclined towards the field of science or international studies, I discovered a new program through which I was able to volunteer and tie my two interests together in the field of public health. This program, the Medical Legal Partnership for Kentucky Children (MLPKC), was a start up program which I stumbled across when researching potential volunteer positions at the Kentucky Access to Justice Foundation. There was only a one line description of the program on the tail end of a pro-bono law page, but on a whim I e-mailed the contact, Jackie Duncan, to find more information about the program. Four weeks later, I was researching grants to help get this program on its feet.

The Medical Legal Partnership for Kentucky Children is a program that is being developed to provide free access to a lawyer in order to assist families who have applied for and have been denied Medicaid. Without this assistance, many families would neglect their children’s health due to financial and legal reasons. The program would like to expand (over the next 5 years) to include solving housing and educational issues for poverty-stricken families in Fayette County and surrounding counties. The program hopes to improve health by enhancing not only health care, but also the physically and emotional environment surrounding the poverty-stricken families.

Currently, the program has received start-up support with which they have formed a committee of a pediatrician, a lawyer, and a coordinator who meet on a regular basis. After

spending two weeks this past summer working with the program, I realized this would be an outlet in the future I would like to assist because the necessity of a program that helps provide Medicaid for children in Fayette County is a pressing issue which is in dire need of a solution. The Medical Legal Partnership also neatly combines my interests in the more social side of science and potentially deals with international citizens. My involvement in this program initiated my interest in the public health field.

The evidence for a need for such a program is present through “The Annual Kentucky Healthcare Report” which demonstrates the significant numbers of children who do not have health care in the Lexington area. Over 3,417 residents of Fayette County were eligible for Medicaid but did not receive Medicaid support due to failure to apply and other undocumented reasons (in 2004). 10.8% of Fayette County Children under the age of 18 had no medical health insurance in 2000. In 2005-2006, the number of uninsured children in Kentucky increased 3% from the previous year. Kentucky has been ranked 42nd for the most negative health outcomes for children in the United States. These statistics from the Annual Kentucky Healthcare Report are a few of the many statistics which demonstrate the severity of children’s health care coverage in Fayette County, and Kentucky in general. By publicizing the resources that are available to solve this health care crisis, I hope to increase the overall health care and well-being of poverty stricken families in the Lexington area.

Because the program is in the basic stages of development, it is in need of publicity to make potential clients aware of its existence, increase pro bono work from the community, increase administrative support and potentially serve as a tool for securing donations and grants. When I attended one of the committee meetings over the summer, I recognized this importance and believe that for the program to continue developing, the next step must be to improve its

public relations. I would like to enhance the health care of poverty-stricken families by providing them with the resources to better their current situation.

As my jury project, I would like to develop the public relations of the MLPKC by creating a website for the program. However, because many of the potential clients would not have convenient access to the Internet, I will also be creating supplemental brochures (in English as well as Spanish) which will target clients who will qualify for receiving legal and medical assistance through this program. These brochures will potentially be distributed to pediatricians who will then give the information to qualifying patients.

Medical-legal partnerships have been set up in various states (such as Boston University's Program) and I will be looking closely at their publicity materials to note successes and failures with their publicity attempts. I plan to research how these other programs target their clients and how they provide them with the information about their medical legal programs. I will also research the most effective way to present information through or a brochure or website, how to go about creating a website and the best method to go about translating the brochure to Spanish.

Schedule for project:

There is no set deadline for when the website or brochures need to be developed, but the sooner the information is presented, the better. My personal schedule as of now includes:

- October:**
- Research how to best target the clients with the information
 - Research the best method for designing a webpage
 - Begin compiling the information that will be included in the webpage
and the brochures.
 - Determine best method for translating brochure

November: -Compile information and complete brochure

-Complete English and Spanish brochures

-Complete basic design of webpage

December: -Complete Webpage, Revise

-Research best way to print brochures & print them

-Start researching methods of distribution of the information

January: -Distribute information to clients.

Budget:

There may be potential costs associated with the webpage. I am still considering learning how to create a webpage and will be seeking information in the form of website design classes, books and online tutorials. If needed, I may compensate a fellow computer competent student to assist with the more complicated technical details I am unable to complete by myself.

For the brochures: The MLPKC may provide me the monetary resources to print and distribute the brochures. This is something I will need to research further if it is an outlet I choose to pursue.

Jurors:

My potential juror list at this time includes the committee members of the MLPKC whom I worked with this summer. I would like to continue working with them throughout this semester on this project because they are very open to new ideas, appreciate assisting me and informing me about the business aspect of the MLPKC and have time available to assist with my jury project.

Lisa Ross, Program Coordinator for Medical Legal Partnership for Kentucky Children

Jan Clark, Attorney for Medical Legal Partnership for Kentucky Children

Sources:

Homepage for Boston Universities' Medical Legal Program. This is the program the committee

is using to help model their program, so this may be a good starting point for webpage

ideas: <http://www.mlpforchildren.org/>

Source for statistics: The Kentucky HealthCare Market Report:

<http://admin.cms2005.com/docServer.aspx?f=Nzk0NTYxMTI=>