

GEORGIA HEALTH POLICY CENTER



FISCAL YEAR 2013 INTERIM PROGRAM EVALUATION OF THE HEALTH LAW PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Presented to Sylvia Coley, Director



Executive Summary

The Health Law Partnership (HeLP) is an innovative community collaboration among Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (Children's), Georgia State University's College of Law (GSU), and the Atlanta Legal Aid Society (ALAS) that serves low-income and minority children by addressing the social, environmental, and economic factors that adversely impact their health and well-being. HeLP was the first medical-legal community partnership for children established in the South, and is part of a growing number of such partnerships across the nation. HeLP is a recognized innovator and leader in the national medical-legal partnership trend to develop what are called "public health legal services."ⁱ

Beginning in Fiscal Year 2012 (FY2012), abbreviated annual reports focusing on annual survey findings were generated for FY2012 and FY2013 with a return to a more comprehensive report in FY2014 should funding be available. While the comprehensive evaluation model involves a multi-source and quasi-quantitative/qualitative approach, the components included in this report are drawn from participant annual surveys and data from the HeLP Case Management Database System (CMDS) which was used to assist in survey evaluation. The study period for this report begins July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013 (FY2013) and represents the second interim report as a component of the comprehensive evaluation.

The intended applications of this report are to provide interim findings that may assist HeLP staff, partners, and Advisory Council members in program operations and strategic management, to secure public and private funding for financial sustainability, and to be used in potential research, publications, and presentations.

Client Surveys

Satisfaction surveys provide the client with the opportunity to give feedback on a program's quality and effectiveness. Administration of the client satisfaction survey is a continuous process. Survey protocols include the administration of four pre-intervention questions as part of the client intake interview. The pre-survey questions relate to physical and emotional health and financial and overall well-being and are compared to responses to the same questions asked during the post-intervention survey.

The post-intervention survey is a 20-question instrument that is administered 4-6 weeks after a case has been completed and closed. Only clients with cases where more than self-help materials or community resource referral information are disseminated are contacted for participation in the survey.

In FY2013, pre-intervention surveys were completed for 558 cases. Post-intervention survey calls were attempted for 70 closed cases. Of the 70 closed cases, 11 surveys were active in the interview process during the time of this analysis and are excluded from the post-intervention survey response rate. Sixty-three percent (37 of 59) of the post-intervention surveys were completed by clients.

Post-Intervention Surveys by Case Type and Reported Satisfaction

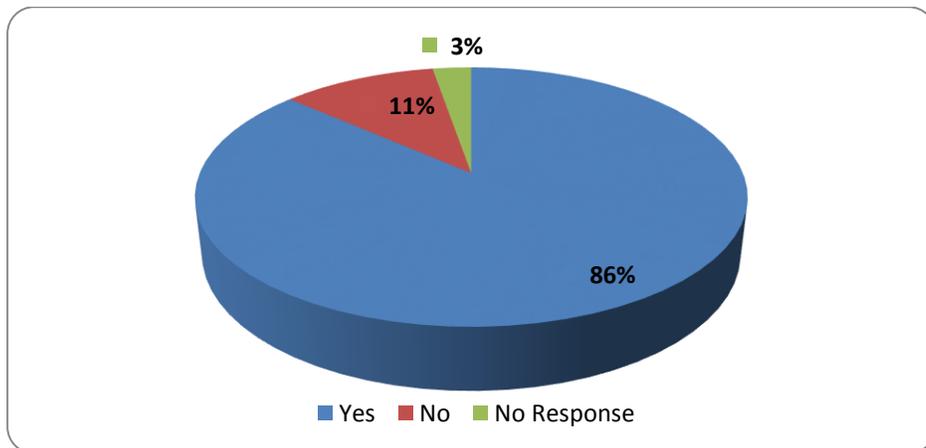
Case Type	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know	Total
Education	5	2	0	3	0	10
Family Law	7	2	0	0	0	9
Disability/SSI	1	3	1	0	1	6
Housing/Utilities	2	1	1	1	0	5
Medicaid/PeachCare	2	0	0	0	0	2
Public Benefits	2	0	0	0	0	2
Other	2	0	0	0	0	2
Wills/Advanced Directives	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	22	8	2	4	1	37
Percent of Total Clients	59%	22%	5%	11%	3%	100%

When asked to rate interactive experiences with the HeLP program and staff, 80 percent or more of clients rated Excellent or Good:

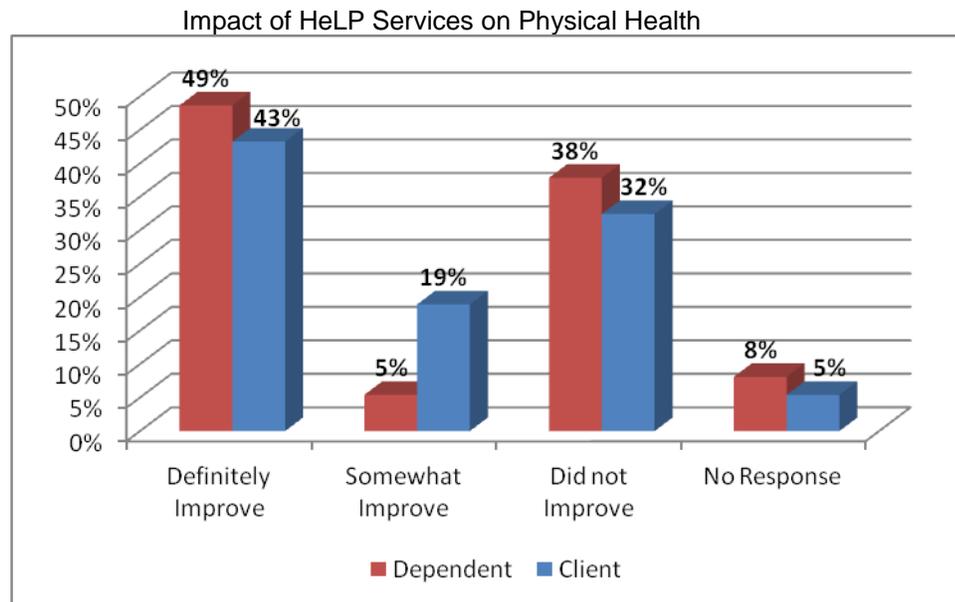
- Seventy-seven percent of clients rated the process for being referred to HeLP as Excellent or Good.
- Ninety-four percent of clients responded Excellent or Good when asked to rate how well they were treated when they contacted HeLP.
- When asked to rate how well staff explained the type of assistance and services provided by HeLP, 90 percent of clients responded Excellent or Good.
- More than 80 percent of clients rated HeLP staff's efforts to keep them informed on their case as Excellent or Good.
- For clients who received referrals to other agencies for matters that were outside the scope of HeLP services, 60 percent rated the referral process as Excellent.
- More than 80 percent of clients who completed the post-intervention survey rated their satisfaction with the services received from HeLP to assist them with their legal problem as Excellent or Good.

Client satisfaction with HeLP services and the program overall is high (Excellent or Good). A substantial number of survey respondents indicated that the services positively impact their lives:

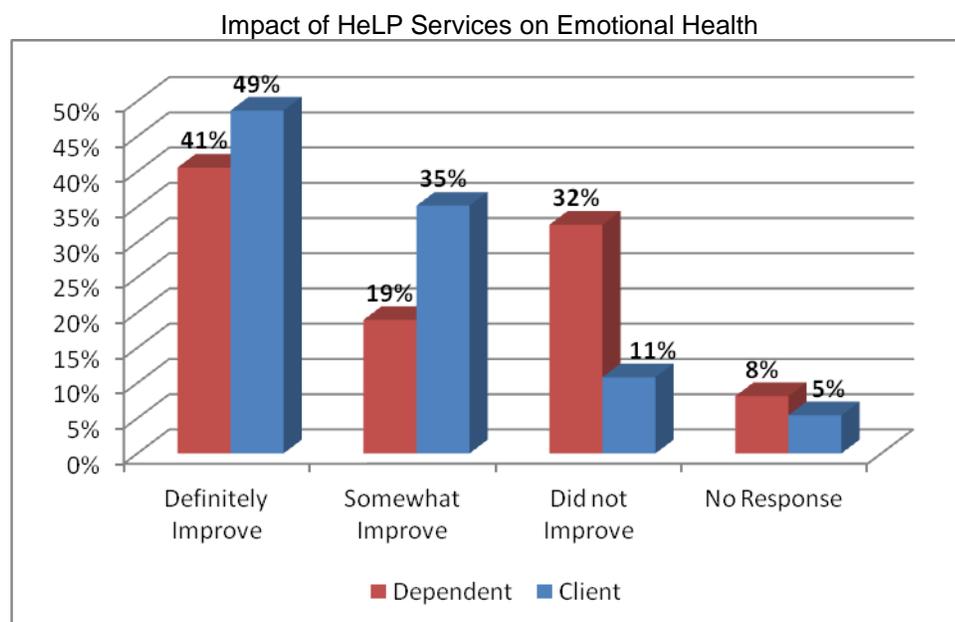
- Among the 37 respondents who completed a post-intervention survey, 86 percent indicated they would be better able to handle similar problems should they experience them again in the future.



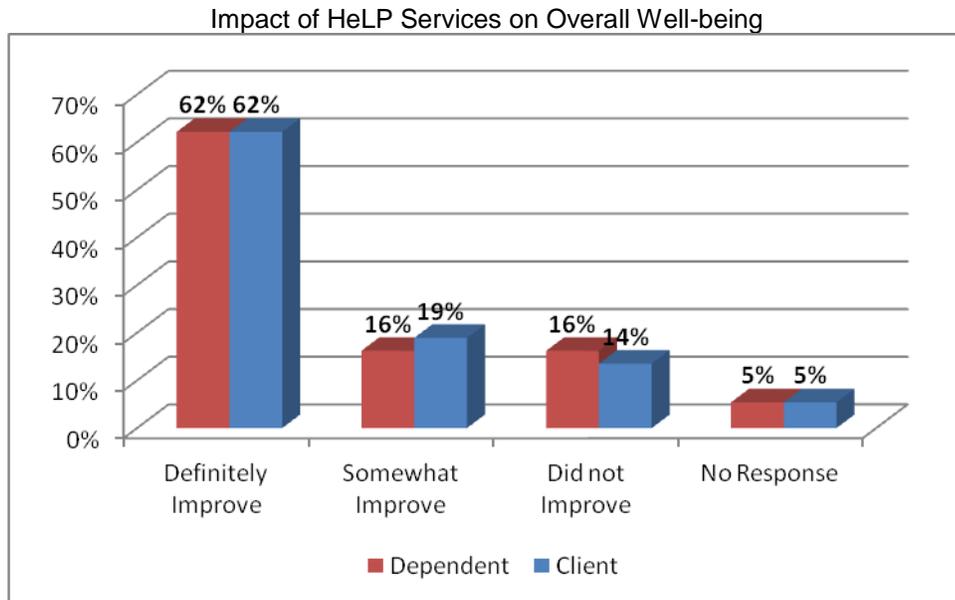
- Approximately 49 percent of clients affirmed that HeLP services had a positive impact on their family's financial situation.
- Fifty-four percent of clients reported that the services received from HeLP helped to Definitely or Somewhat Improve the physical health of their child. Sixty-two percent of clients reported that the services received from HeLP helped to Definitely or Somewhat Improve their physical health.



- Sixty percent of clients reported that the services received from HeLP helped to Definitely or Somewhat Improve the emotional health of their child. Eighty-four percent of clients reported that the services received from HeLP helped to Definitely or Somewhat Improve their emotional health.

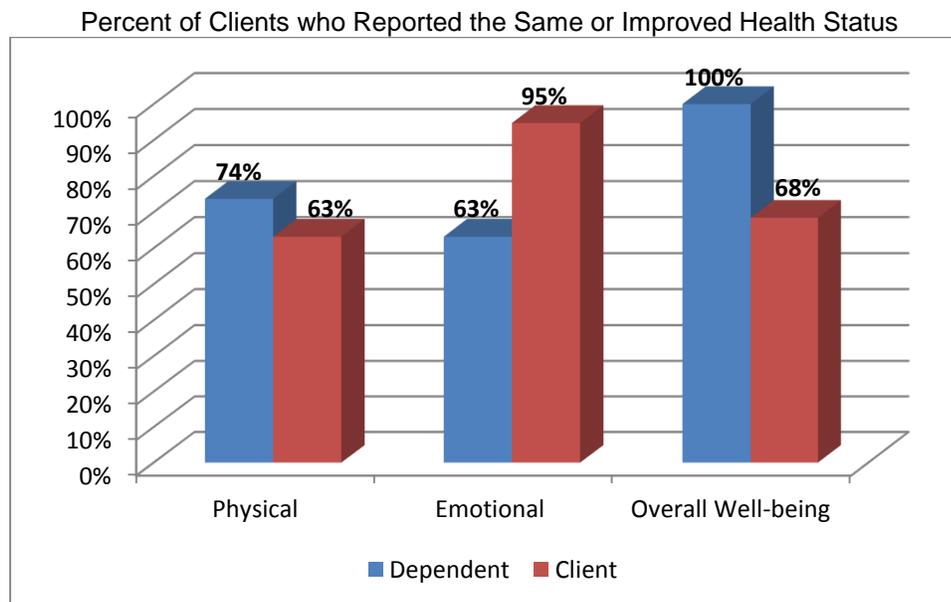


- Seventy-eight percent of clients reported that the services received from HeLP helped to Definitely or Somewhat Improve the overall well-being of their child. Eighty-one percent of clients reported that the services received from HeLP helped to Definitely or Somewhat Improve their overall well-being.



Client-matched pre-intervention and post-intervention surveys are designed to gather information on the impact HeLP services may have on health and well-being:

- For the 19 clients who completed both the pre-intervention and the post-intervention survey, 37 percent reported an improved rating in their family's financial situation during the post-survey as compared to the pre-survey.
- The majority of clients who completed the pre- and post-intervention surveys reported the Same or Improved health status for both their child and themselves after receiving services from HeLP.



- Forty-two percent of clients also rated their child’s physical health and emotional health as improved when comparing pre-intervention and post-intervention responses. The percent who reported improved emotional health for their child equaled 11 percent. Twenty-one percent rated their child’ overall well-being as Better.
- The percent of clients who rated their physical and emotional health status as improved was 21 percent and 63 percent respectively. Thirty-seven percent of clients reported an improved overall well-being when comparing pre- and post-intervention survey responses.

However, the survey responses also suggest opportunities for improvement. Approximately 11 percent of 59 clients who completed the post-intervention survey rated their satisfaction with the services received to address their legal problem and the staff’s efforts to keep them informed on their case as Poor.

Referring Provider Satisfaction

This evaluation included the administration of satisfaction surveys to HeLP referring providers (health care providers, social workers, and hospital school educators), students, pro bono volunteers, and educational seminar participants. The general survey design was based on a five-point scale with additional questions requesting participant comments/feedback.

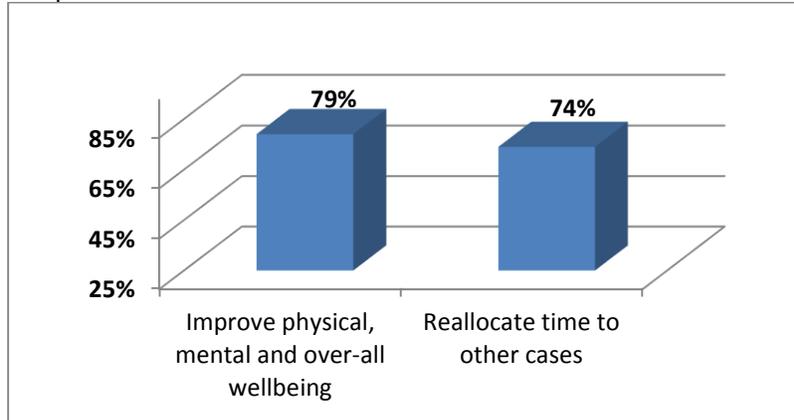
Historically, provider satisfaction surveys are administered annually during the evaluation period to providers who refer families to HeLP. However, in recent years, HeLP staff have found it increasingly difficult to obtain the name of the referring provider from the clients. To ensure that physicians and social workers who refer clients to HeLP were contacted, HeLP worked with Children’s leadership to obtain the names and email addresses for social worker and physician staff to accompany the names of providers who HeLP was able to obtain as part of their intake process or legal work with the clients. Of the 173 surveys emailed to providers who potentially referred clients to HeLP in FY2013, 38 survey recipients completed and returned the survey. This results in a response rate of 22 percent.

Providers who referred clients to the program rated their interactive experiences with HeLP as Excellent or Good:

- Eighty-six percent of providers rated HeLP’s ability to provide them with information about services as Excellent or Good.
- Approximately 77 percent rated the overall quality of the responses received when contacting HeLP as Excellent or Good.
- Seventy-seven percent of providers rated HeLP’s response time to return referring providers’ calls as Excellent or Good.

Referring providers also noted that HeLP services had a positive impact on the health of their patients and families as well as their ability to treat more patients with HeLP’s assistance.

Impact of HeLP on Patient Health Status and Provider Resources



- Seventy-nine percent of referring providers indicated through the annual survey that HeLP services had a positive impact on the physical and mental health status and overall well-being of the patients and families served.
- Seventy-four percent affirmed that they felt the services provided by HeLP allowed them to reallocate time to other cases.

Approximately 78 percent of respondents indicated that working with HeLP had a Positive impact on his/her perceptions of working collaboratively with the legal community to serve patients and their families.

Responses from referring providers indicated that there may be opportunities for improvement:

- Approximately 11 percent rated HeLP's ability to provide referring providers with information about HeLP services as Fair or Poor.
- Referring providers continue to comment that they wish to receive more feedback from HeLP on the status of patients referred to HeLP for services.

Administrative Claims Data Analysis

Beginning in FY2009, HeLP has received administrative claims data from Children's for consenting HeLP clients who provide informed consent and HIPAA authorization to help assess the impact of HeLP services on utilization of health care services and potential cost-savings for the health care provider. For cases that closed during SFY2012, the data request and required supporting documentation was sent to Children's on July 20, 2012. An analysis of the administrative claims data for a small cohort (12 cases) of SSI/Disability and Medicaid cases demonstrated:

- Average service utilization across all service areas decreased after the completion of PHLS.
- Average charges per visit declined for 50 percent or more of the cohort in the areas of diagnostic procedures, inpatient care, outpatient surgery, and outpatient care.
- Concurrently, average payments per visit decreased for 50 percent or more of the cohort in the areas of clinic services, diagnostic procedures, ED visits, inpatient care, outpatient surgery, and outpatient care.

Student Satisfaction

A unique component of the HeLP model is its provision of interdisciplinary education to law, medical, social work, and public health graduate students and how it may impact the way these future practitioners work collaboratively with other professionals to care for and serve patients/ clients and their families. Currently, HeLP offers educational opportunities to law, medical, social work and public health graduate students. The following surveys collect qualitative information from participants in the HeLP Legal Services Clinic, Externship and Internship programs, Health Law Advocacy Course, HeLP Legal Services Case Rounds, Fundamentals in Medicine III Course, and Medical Resident Longitudinal Cohort Analysis.

HeLP Student Satisfaction

In FY2013, contact information was received for 43 students who participated in the HeLP Legal Services Clinic, HeLP externship, and HeLP summer internship programs. Participation in each student experience varies widely. Students who participate in the GSU Legal Services Clinic receive class credit and grades over a minimum of one academic year. Externs represent law students from other local academic Universities. Externships are also for a minimum of one year and the students receive pass/fail credit. Finally, law students who participate in the summer internship program are volunteers who spend 10 weeks per week working with HeLP.

Twenty-one completed the online survey representing a response rate of 49 percent. This is an increase from the 42 percent response rate achieved in FY2012. Ninety percent of respondents represented the discipline of Law, five percent Medicine, and five percent Social Work.

Students participating in the HeLP Legal Services Clinic or the HeLP externship and summer internship programs who have the opportunity to assist in the provision of legal services gave the program high marks (Excellent or Good) when rating the program's ability to:

- meet the needs of the clients (95%),
- support them with legal resources needed to assist clients (95%),
- assist clients in understanding the assistance and services provided (62%),
- meet the legal needs of their clients (77%),
- educate social workers and health care providers on HeLP services (86%),
- gain better professional skills through their HeLP experience (95%).

Approximately 48 percent indicated they were Definitely Likely to remain involved in public service activities, while 33 percent reported they were Likely to remain involved. Fourteen percent of respondents reported a Neutral position on their likelihood of staying involved in public service activities. One respondent reported they were Unlikely to remain involved in public service activities.

Opportunities for Improvement shared by survey participants include:

- Students rated HeLP's ability to assist clients as Fair or Poor in the areas of Employment (36%), Public Benefits (27%), Family Law (13%), and Housing/Utilities (13%).
- The percent of students who reported that they would stay involved in public service activities based on their experience with HeLP declined from 64 percent in FY2012 to 48 percent in FY2013.
- Increased program awareness among Children's staff.

Health Law and Advocacy Course

The Health Legislation and Advocacy (HLA) is a two-semester course sequence focusing on the development and implementation of health policy through legislative and regulatory mechanisms. According to HLA participant survey responses, the experience was both satisfying and educational. Students had various experiences based on the community partner with whom they collaborated.

- All survey respondents rated the classroom experience as Extremely Satisfying and all felt the classroom experience was Extremely Helpful to improving the students' understanding of legislative development and advocacy processes. Eighty-three percent felt the faculty was helpful in addressing their questions and concerns and provided the students with the resources needed to work with the community partners.
- The majority (83% or more) rated their HLA experience as Extremely or Somewhat Helpful in developing and enhancing their professional and collaboration-building skills.

Opportunities for improvement suggested by the HLA course participants include:

- Encourage community partners to remain engaged with the students once the legislative session has begun.
- Ongoing efforts to help students understand the intricacies of legislative collaboration may be helpful as half of the students responded that the HLA course only Partially Met Expectations.

HeLP Case Rounds

This survey gathers information on how interdisciplinary education and collaboration affects the way developing physicians care for their patients. For medical residents, participation in the HeLP Case Rounds has a positive impact on their learning experience and increases their likelihood to ask patients about legal problems that impact health.

- Seventy-seven percent of respondents indicated that participation in HeLP Case Rounds was Very Important or Important in contributing to their clinical education experience and 87 percent Strongly Agree or Agree that participation helped them to develop interdisciplinary skills.
- Seventy-seven percent of case round participants indicated they were Very Likely or Likely to ask patients whether they are experiencing legal problems that may affect their health or ability to follow the prescribed care plan.
- Eighty-two percent of survey respondents indicated that incorporating lawyers in the treatment team can be Extremely or Very Influential in providing patient care (41% each) for those patients experiencing socioeconomic or legal problems.

- Approximately 95 percent of respondents Strongly or Somewhat Agree that participation in HeLP Clinic Case Rounds positively affected their perception of interdisciplinary collaboration and practice.
- Ninety-one percent of respondents either Strongly or Somewhat Agree that participation helped them to develop interdisciplinary skills.

However, it appears that awareness of and access to legal resources may not be enough to change how providers assist clients with the non-medical problems impacting health. HeLP professors may wish to consider ways to emphasize the broad range of issues that can affect the health and well-being of the patients that may have a legal remedy and why it is important to screen for these problems.

- Eighteen percent of residents reported a Neutral status when asked if they were likely to refer a patient to a legal resource if they are aware that the patient is experiencing a socioeconomic, environmental, or legal issue. Five percent said they were Unlikely or Very Unlikely to refer to a legal resource. All respondents indicated they are Very Likely or Likely to refer patients to a social worker and 96 percent would refer to the resident or attending physician.
- Eighteen percent or more of respondents indicated a Neutral status when asked how likely they are to screen patients for socioeconomic or legal issues related to Family Law (39%), Disability/SSI (27%), Public Benefits (18%), and Housing /Utilities (18%).

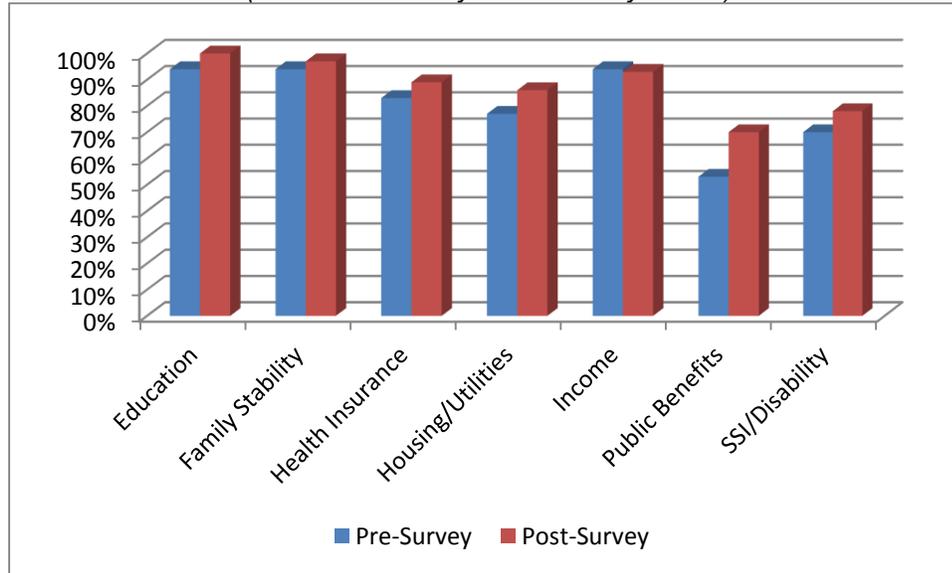
FOM III

HeLP offered third-year medical students a series of four lectures on medical-legal cooperation over the course of the 2012-2013 academic year. Topics covered during these sessions included introduction to HeLP and interdisciplinary problem-solving, similarities and differences between the professions of medicine and law, ethical issues encountered in interdisciplinary practice, and end-of-life issues.

The interdisciplinary education offered to third year medical students increased their knowledge and awareness of how legal problems may affect the health of low-income patients and their families and how likely they are to screen for these problems.

- HeLP lectures increased awareness (Extremely Aware or Moderately Aware) among residents of how the following legal issues may affect the health of their participants when comparing pre- and post-survey responses:
 - Education (6% increase)
 - Health Insurance (5% increase)
 - Housing/Utilities (9% increase)
 - Public Benefits (17% increase)
 - Transportation (8% increase)

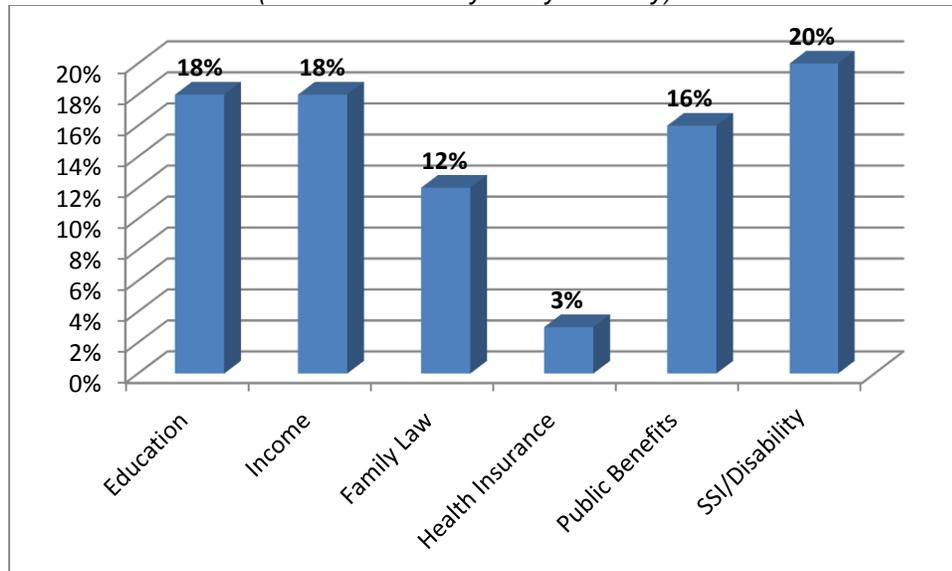
Pre/Post Comparison of Reported Awareness to Screen for Socioeconomic and Legal Issues
(Percent Extremely or Moderately Aware)



When compared to pre-survey findings, 27 percent more medical students indicated on the post-survey that involving lawyers on their treatment team can be Extremely Influential or Very Influential on providing patient care.

After participating in the lecture series, medical students also said they were more likely (Extremely Likely or Likely) to screen patients for socioeconomic and legal issues that can impact the health of their patients and their families.

Increased Screening among Medical Students
(Percent Extremely Likely or Likely)



Comparison of pre- and post-surveys results indicated that students are more likely to screen patients in the following areas:

- Education (18% increase)
- Income (18% increase)
- Family Law (12% increase)
- Health Insurance (3% increase)
- Public Benefits (16% increase)
- Disability/SSI (20% increase)

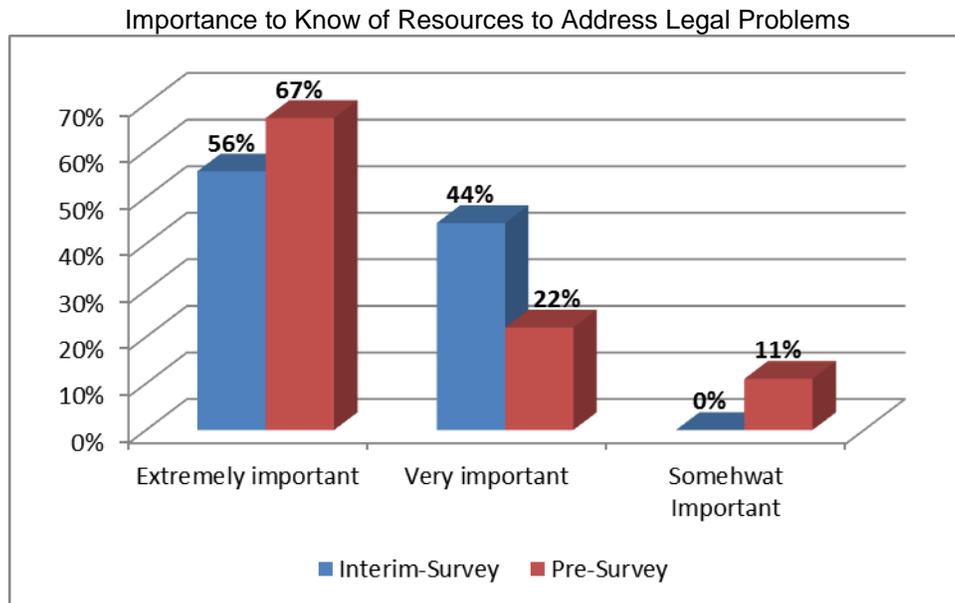
Forty-one percent more students indicated they were Extremely Likely or Likely to refer patients to a legal resource when they were aware that the patient was experiencing a socioeconomic, environmental, or legal issue that may affect health on the post-intervention survey (66%) administered after a four lecture series when compared to the pre-intervention survey (24%).

Resident Year 2 Survey

As the second in a series of three surveys to this resident cohort, the interim survey begins to gather information on residents' experiences with HeLP and how that experience may impact their perceptions of interprofessional education and practice as well as delivery of care.

- The majority of residents reported that the collaborative interdisciplinary experiences were valuable.
- When aware that a patient is experiencing a socioeconomic, environmental, or legal problem, they are most likely to inform a social worker (100%) or the lead resident (100%). Fifty-five percent reported they are likely to refer to a legal resource. This question appeared on both the pre- and interim survey.

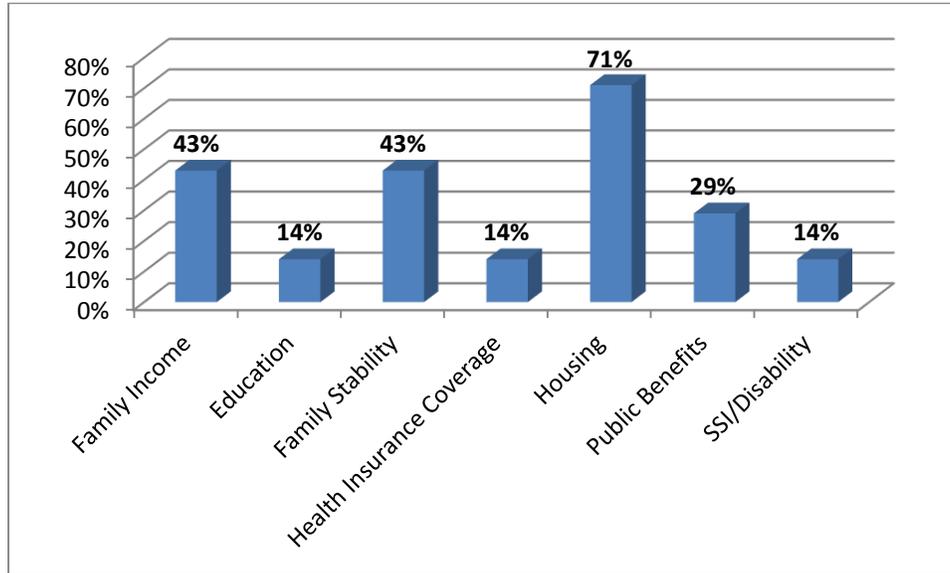
Residents were asked on both the pre- and interim-surveys to rate how important they feel it is to know of resources that can address legal problems affecting the health and well-being of their patients.



- Eighty-nine percent of pre-survey respondents reported it was Extremely or Very Important for residents to know of resources that can address legal problems affecting the health and well-being of their patients.

- Comparatively, all respondents of the interim-survey indicated it was Extremely (56%) or Very Important (44%) for residents to know of resources that can address legal problems affecting the health and well-being of their patients.

After participating in the HeLP lecture series, a portion of residents reported an increased likeliness to screen patients in all categories of socioeconomic and legal issues.



- Residents indicated the greatest increase in likeliness to screen in the areas of Housing (71%), Family Income (43%) and Family Stability (43%).

Fifty-six percent of residents reported that participation in HeLP educational programs helped them to better understand the relationships among poverty, disparities, health, and patient compliance.

Opportunities for improvement to impact the medical residents may include:

- Ensuring that all participate in a HeLP education event. Approximately 33 percent of students reported they had not participated in any HeLP educational events.
- Promoting screening of legal issues during patient interactions. When comparing responses among students who completed both the Resident Year 1 Pre-Survey and the Resident Year 2 Interim Survey, students reported a decreased likeliness to screen for health insurance coverage (71%), family income (57%), and public benefits (57%).
- Demonstrating how patients with suspected legal problems can benefit from referrals to HeLP. Forty-four percent of survey participants had never referred a client to HeLP.

Interdisciplinary Provider Education

Provider education sessions offered by HeLP to Children's social workers and health care providers and staff remained furloughed in FY2013 while new educational objectives and curricula are being developed. Impending changes in the professional education programs will require a reassessment of the evaluation instrument and potential modifications.

In FY2013, HeLP provided four educational sessions over a one-week period for medical residents beginning their residency at Hughes Spalding Hospital. While the number of medical residents who attended the HeLP sessions was not reported, 16 completed the post evaluation surveys.

Half of the survey participants rated the topic presented in the education session as Excellent in helping them to identify potential patients/clients who may need legal services, while the remaining rated it as Good. When asked to rate the presented topic in assisting the resident in advocating on behalf of his or

her patients/families, 63 percent responded Excellent, 31 percent reported Good, and six percent reported Fair.

All survey participants indicated that they are more likely to ask patients/clients about their legal needs after attending the session. Similarly, 94 percent said they were more likely to advocate on behalf of their patients'/clients' legal needs.

Approximately two-thirds (69%) of participants rated their overall satisfaction with the educational session as Excellent while the remaining third rated their overall satisfaction as Good. All survey participants reported that they would recommend the HeLP educational sessions to their colleagues.

Evaluation Strategy

An evaluation workgroup was assembled in January 2013 to review and update the HeLP logic model, survey instruments and administration protocols as it completes its first decade of operations and strategically prepares for the next 10 years. This process lends many opportunities for improving the evaluation including the data captured to help inform program improvement through both process and outcome measures. Since its inception, HeLP has diligently worked to develop and implement four signature service components (public health legal services, interprofessional education, advocacy and research). The success achieved by HeLP thus far has resulted in a broad array of interest from beyond the disciplines of law and medicine to also include social work and public health. Implementation of the ACA has more distinctly defined the need for hospitals and health system to formally coordinate with medical legal partnerships to achieve care coordination, prepare for global payments, and meet community benefit requirements. Clinical providers now have a greater incentive to collaborate with organizations that can address the socioeconomic barriers that effect patient care and utilization of health care resources. Collectively these influencing factors can help both HeLP and Children's achieve common goals through strategic alignment and a strengthened partnership.

REFERENCES

ⁱ Shulman et al., “Public Health Legal Services: A New and Powerful Vision?” Boston College Law School Legal Studies Research Paper No. 150 (March 2008), *forthcoming* in *Georgetown Journal on Poverty Law & Policy* (Summer 2008).