

Lawyers' Challenge for Children: Spotlighting the Health Law Partnership

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A Section 8 landlord has repeatedly refused to clean up significant amounts of mold in his tenants' apartment. The child living in the apartment is admitted to the ICU with a severe asthma attack. Where do his parents turn for help?

A mother flees domestic violence. As a result, she and her daughter are now homeless. The child is hospitalized due to lack of treatment for her juvenile diabetes. Who will assist this family?

The Health Law Partnership (HeLP) has addressed these legal issues and handled over 233 other cases since it became fully operational in September 2004. The only project of its kind in the South, and one of only a handful of such initiatives in the country, HeLPs mission is to improve and maintain the health and well being of Georgia's low-income children and their families. The project is an interdisciplinary initiative of the Atlanta Legal Aid Society, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, and Georgia State University College of Law, who have partnered in order to combine the health care expertise of hospital professionals with the legal expertise of attorneys. HeLP maintains offices both at Children's at Egleston and Children's at Scottish Rite, striving to address critical needs of children that impact their health once at home, such as special education, housing, and public benefits. In addition to its direct legal services work, the HeLP team, directed by lead attorney Sylvia Caley, also provides valuable in-service training for hospital professionals and conducts educational presentations for members of the Atlanta community.

Patients treated by Children's Healthcare of Atlanta will return to homes across the state of Georgia. In order to ensure that the children served by HeLP maintain good health once they return home, volunteer attorneys are needed from every part of the state. For more information, or to volunteer, please contact Bridget Beier at (404) 785-5945.

This is the second in a continuing series dedicated to raising awareness of, and pro bono support for, critical legal services programs for Georgia's children and youth. The Lawyers' Challenge for Children, an initiative of the YLD and the Juvenile Law Committee, has been created to highlight innovative programs that serve Georgia's most vulnerable populations. The need for appropriate legal representation is particularly profound for children. Please look for ways to offer your support throughout the coming year. For more information about the Lawyers' Challenge for Children Campaign, please e-mail Lea Thompson at lea@childwelfare.net.