

IOWA LEGAL AID

HEALTH AND LAW PROJECT: Lawyers working with medical providers can improve patient outcomes

Sometimes medical problems can be addressed with a prescription for legal services. Doctors sometimes decide they cannot properly address many of the health problems of patients without a lawyer's help. Examples include treating a child for asthma and sending them home to substandard housing.

The purpose of Iowa Legal Aid's Health and Law Project is to treat health problems with a legal cure. There are many reasons legal problems can affect a person's health, including poverty, domestic violence, substandard housing and many others. Dealing with these issues can lead to better health. Examples of the cases Iowa Legal Aid has completed include:

- A man who had received a heart transplant began to have health problems caused by mold in his apartment. His doctors contacted the manager of his apartment complex to ask that the problem be fixed immediately, but after two months nothing was done. Faced with having to move in order to stay healthy, he contacted Iowa Legal Aid. After the attorney got involved, the landlord quickly made the repairs to his apartment.

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HOPE. DIGNITY. JUSTICE.

Current partners include:

All Care Community Health Center, Inc., Council Bluffs, IA
Alegent Mercy Hospital, Council Bluffs, IA
Jennie Edmundson Hospital, Council Bluffs, IA
Nebraska Medicine, Omaha, NE
Blank Children's Hospital/Unity Point Health, Des Moines, IA
Primary Health Care, Inc., Des Moines, IA
Crescent Community Health Center, Dubuque, IA
Mahaska Health Partnership, Oskaloosa, IA
Siouxland Community Health Center, Inc., Sioux City, IA

In both community health centers and hospitals, the Health and Law Project has a collaborative relationship between attorneys and health care providers. Working together they address both the medical and civil legal problems of low-income patients to have better overall health and well-being and health care costs are reduced.