



TEXAS A&M HEALTH  
Institute for  
Healthcare Access

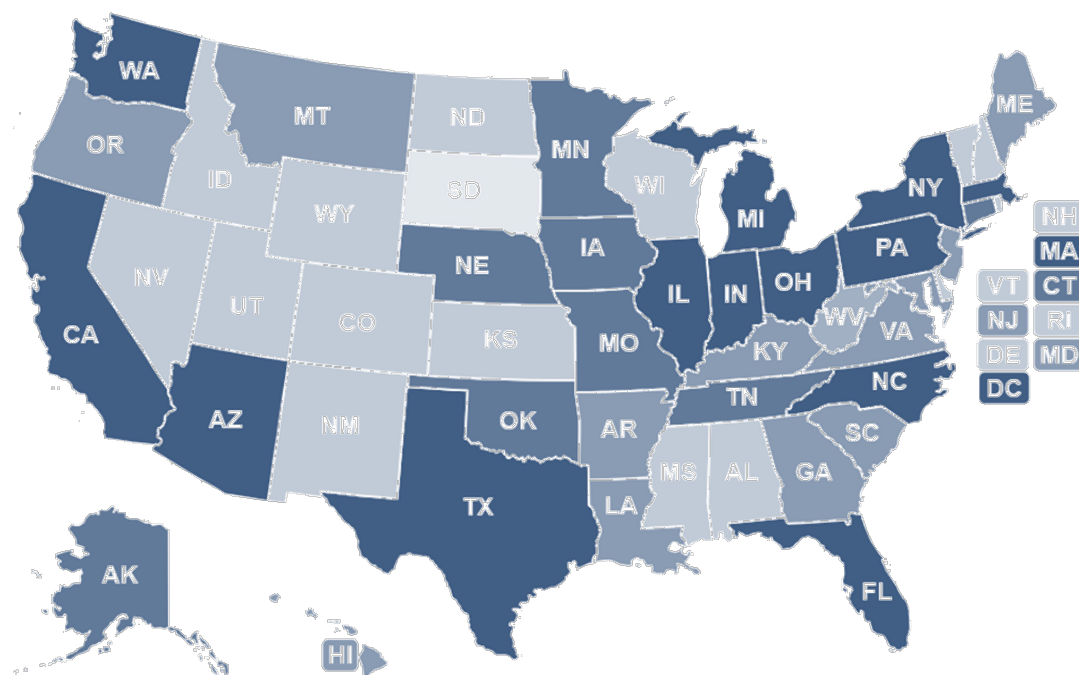
# BLUEPRINTS BEFORE THE BUILD PART II:

LESSONS FROM TWO  
SUCCESSFUL MEDICAL-LEGAL  
PARTNERSHIPS IN TEXAS AND  
BEYOND

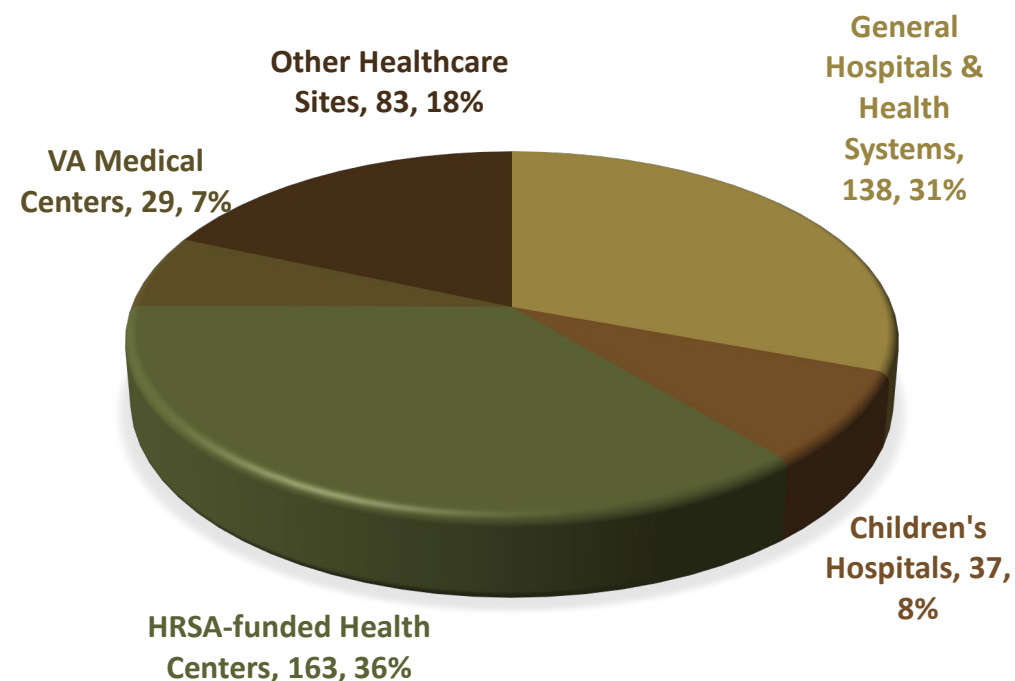
Moderated by Keegan Warren, JD, LLM on  
May 1, 2025



## NATIONALLY, ALL TYPES OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS HAVE ADOPTED THE MLP MODEL, TOTALING OVER 450 COLLABORATIONS.



### MEDICAL PARTNERS







# Addressing NMDOH Through a Medical-Legal Partnership

PRESENTED BY:

**Darci Moore**, Population Health Programs Coordinator

**Carol Luna**, Community Health Worker

**Susan Soto**, Staff Attorney

# Agenda

- AccessHealth's **commitment** to NMDOH
- The **relationship** between unmet legal needs, NMDOH, and health outcomes
- Lessons **learned** in the development and implementation of a Medical-Legal Partnership within a Federally Qualified Health Center
- Looking ahead

# Why Invest Now?

## AccessHealth's Commitment to NMDOH

# This is the "why"

- I feel confident now thanks to you. You have truly been a blessing to me and I know to many others. Keep up the good work!  
- C.T.
- Thanks so much. You've been so helpful.  
- Y.O.
- Le agradezco sinceramente el tiempo que se tomó para revisar mi Motion for Continuance y por las valiosas correcciones que me hizo llegar. Me ayudaron mucho a entender cómo debe presentarse correctamente.  
- M.L.

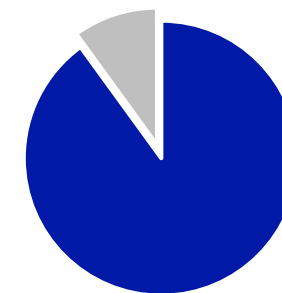
# PATIENT PROFILE

♥ accesshealth

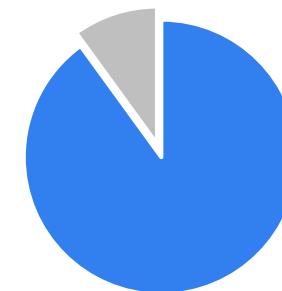
# 19,288 +

## Unduplicated Patients Served at 6 Medical Sites in 2024

38% Male | 62% Female



90% of Patients are Minorities



98% of Patients in 2024 had Household  
Incomes at or Below 200%  
of the Federal Poverty Level

## BASED ON INSURANCE

50%

Uninsured

19%

Private

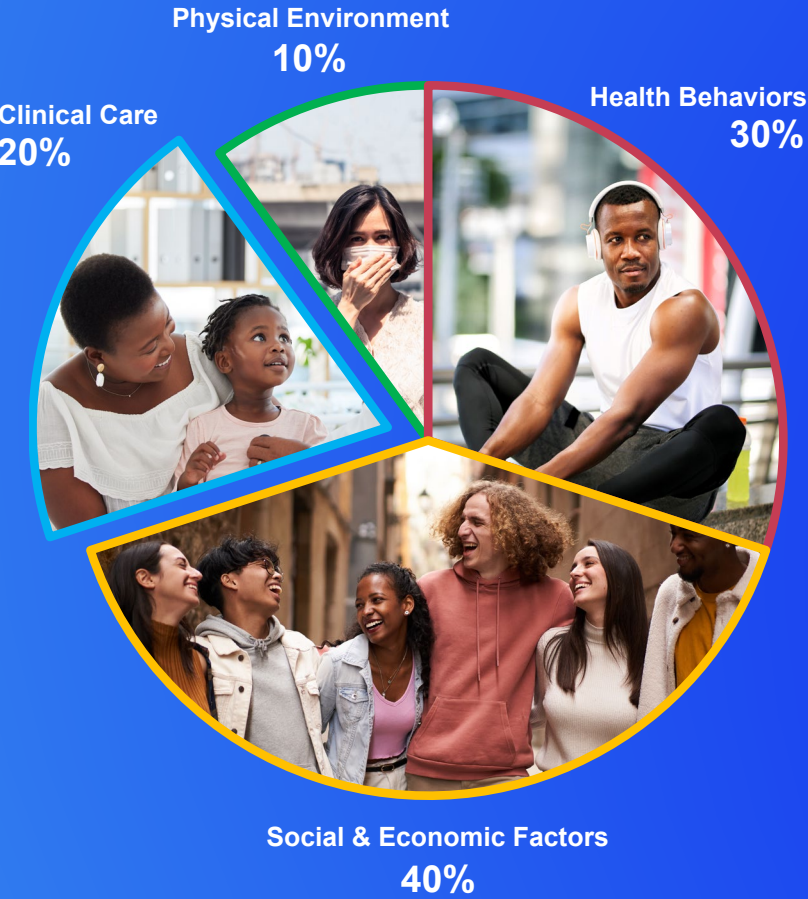
28%

Medicaid/CHIP

3%

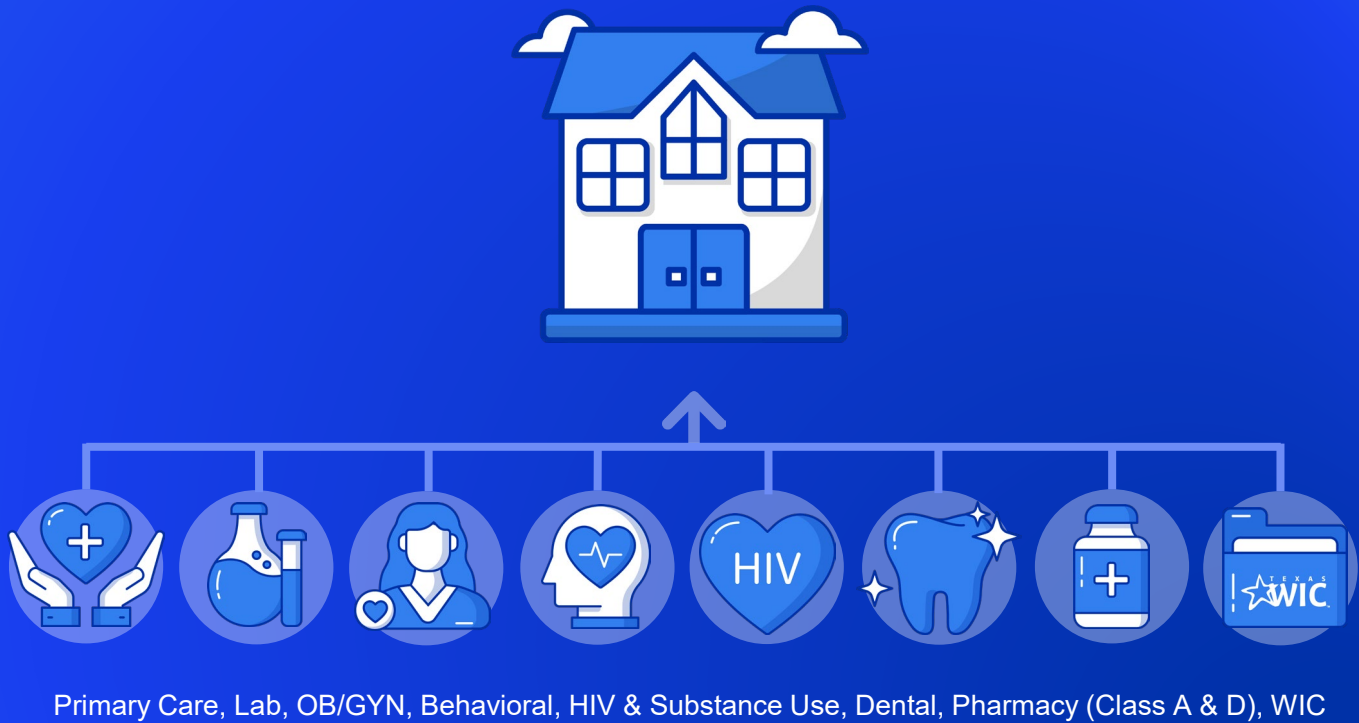
Medicare

# FACTORS AFFECTING HEALTH OUTCOMES



# INTEGRATED CARE SYSTEM

Community Centered Health Home





# Forming the MLP at AccessHealth: 2019

- In February 2019, AccessHealth leaders attended an **MLP learning collaborative** hosted by Harris County Public Health & visited with various legal aid providers
- HVL had an **existing MLP with Texas Children's Hospital** & AccessHealth's Sr. Director of Population Health reached out for a tour and meeting
- HVL's **pro bono model** was most sustainable and HVL was willing to expand to Fort Bend to build an MLP

# Forming the MLP at AccessHealth: 2021

- By early 2021, AccessHealth was ready with **seed funding** for an MLP
- The **pilot** was set to run August – December 2021
- During that time, HVL **trained** AccessHealth staff

# Forming the MLP at AccessHealth: 2021

- In 2021, screeners indicated that **26% of over 650 patients surveyed** had legal needs
- Greatest areas of need: Immigration, Traffic tickets, Housing, Guardianships
- Pilot Stage (2021) - **Patient referrals to HVL** and an in-house **Legal Education series**

# Forming the MLP at AccessHealth: 2023

- In May 2023, AccessHealth reached out to HVL about **funding for a part-time attorney** (the organizations decided on a full-time attorney to start the program)
- The MLP staff attorney position was posted in fall of 2023
- **A good fit:** a person connected to Fort Bend, who had some practice experience to be able to work somewhat independently, and who spoke Spanish



# Forming the MLP at AccessHealth: 2024

- Interviews in 2023 did not identify a viable candidate
- Interviews resumed in early 2024
- The MLP staff attorney was **hired in April 2024** and she came on board in May 2024

# Houston Volunteer Lawyers



- Largest provider of **pro bono** legal services in Texas
- **Free legal assistance** with civil legal matters for eligible, low-income area residents
- LegalLines, in-person clinics, pro bono legal representation



# Pilot Stage

- Programs working independently, not **coordinated**
- No **dedicated** attorney
- Unable to update **EMRs**

# Lessons Learned in Year One

- **Collaboration and communication** between entities is key
- **Plan** the level of access to EMRs the staff attorney will have
- **Evaluate** office and program space before launching
- **Budget** for program needs



# A Community Health Worker's Perspective

## What makes our MLP work:

- Clinic rounds
- Training sessions
- Staff referrals
- Patient liaison




# Putting the Pieces Together

## NMDOH, Legal Interventions & Value to Patients

# What We Do

- **Step 1** Patient completes a screening tool addressing 5 non-medical drivers of health: education/employment, transportation, housing/utilities, legal needs, and access to food.
- **Step 2** Screens indicating a need are flagged by clinic staff for the Care Coordination team.
- **Step 3** Our team of Community Health Workers and Navigators contact the patient to provide education, resources, and referrals as appropriate.

 **accesshealth.**  
**SOCIAL & MEDICAL NEEDS FORM**

AccessHealth is committed to reducing both medical and social issues that impact our patients' well-being. Your response to this form will allow us to connect you to our community resources. Kindly respond to questions that apply to **your household**.

**For Office Use Only**  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Patient #: \_\_\_\_\_  
PAS Initials: \_\_\_\_\_ MA Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

**EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

1. Do you want help with school or job training?\*

☐ No ☐ Technical/Vocational Training  
☐ GED ☐ College Readiness  
☐ ESL

2. What is your current employment status? (Choose one)

☐ Unemployed ☐ Full-time job  
☐ Not looking for work ☐ Part-time/Temporary, looking for full-time job  
☐ Part-time or temporary job ☐ N/A

**HOUSING AND UTILITIES**

3. What is your current housing situation? (Choose one)

☐ I have stable housing  
☐ I am staying in a hotel, in a shelter, or with relatives/friends  
☐ I am living on the street, in a car, or in a park

4. In the past 3 months, has the utility company shut off your service for not paying your bills?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. In the past 3 months, did you worry about clothing for you or your family for work, school, etc.?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**FOOD**

6. In the past 3 months, did you worry that your food would run out before you had money to buy more?

☐ Yes ☐ No

7. In the past 3 months, did the food you bought run out before you had money to buy more?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Would you be interested in receiving additional food resources? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

☐ Yes, I would like help signing up for SNAP (food stamps)  
☐ Yes, I would like to be connected to local food pantries  
☐ No

**TRANSPORTATION**

9. In the past 3 months, has a lack of transportation kept you from getting to medical appointments, meetings, work or from getting things you need for daily living? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

☐ Yes, it has kept me from medical appointments and/or getting medications  
☐ Yes, it has kept me from non-medical appointments, meetings, or getting things that I need  
☐ Yes, it has kept me from getting to work  
☐ No

**LEGAL NEEDS**

10. Would you be interested in getting help with any legal matters such as divorce/custody issues, tax and probate, record clearing, immigration, guardianship, or other civil cases?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe

**WE ARE HERE FOR YOU**

11. If any of your needs are urgent, would you like a member of our team to contact you for assistance?

☐ Yes ☐ No

12. If you answered yes, what is a good time to contact you?

☐ Early Morning (8 a.m. – 10 a.m.)  
☐ Mid Morning (10 a.m. – 12 p.m.)  
☐ Lunch (12 p.m. – 2 p.m.)  
☐ Afternoon (2 p.m. – 5 p.m.)

# "Health-Harming Legal Needs"

- Unmet civil legal needs are increasingly characterized as **"Health-Harming Legal Needs."**
- When unresolved, common civil legal issues such as **landlord** issues, **child custody**, and interruption of **income** have devastating health consequences for individuals and families.

Michele Statz and Brianna Watters, 2024: An Agenda for Addressing Health-Harming Legal Needs in Indigenous Communities, American Journal of Public Health 114, 1170\_1174, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2024.307774>



# Legal Needs Addressed by MLP

- Family law
- Landlord / tenant issues
- Alternatives to guardianship
- Guardianship
- Wills & estate planning
- ID restoration
- Consumer law
- Naturalization
- Record clearing
- Employment
- And more...

# Medical-Legal Partnership Today

- In-house Staff Attorney
- Legal Clinics
- LegalLine / *Consejos Legales*
- Group Presentations
- Marketing and Outreach to Patients

Medical-Legal Partnership  
with Houston Volunteer Lawyers

Susan H. Soto, M.Ed., J.D.  
AccessHealth Staff Attorney

## FREE LEGAL ADVICE

**FREE LEGAL ADVICE ON CIVIL LEGAL TOPICS**

- Available to all patients at AccessHealth.
- Family law, housing, estate planning, social security and more.
- For more information, contact the Community Health Worker at your clinic. Ask clinic staff for a referral.



# By the Numbers

- **January - April 2024:**
  - 20 individuals served
- **May - December 2024 (with staff attorney):**
  - 116 individuals received at least legal advice and counsel
  - 23 cases placed with a volunteer lawyer
  - 1000+ individuals screened positive for legal need
- **First Quarter of 2025:**
  - 71 patient-clients were served through the MLP

# Looking Ahead!

## Our Goals for the MLP



# In the Next Twelve Months

- Continue to **build** the pro bono attorney network in Fort Bend County
- **Increase** program capacity (legal access fellow)
- **Offer** legal learning opportunities for patients
- **Launch** pre-/post surveys to track program impact data



# THANK YOU

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National Center for  
Medical  Legal Partnership



# Health, Housing & Justice:

What Kaiser Permanente Learned  
From Investing in Legal Aid Outcomes Evaluation

May 1, 2025

Kaiser Permanente Colorado  
Institute for Health Research  
PiER Center

# Kaiser Permanente Colorado, Institute for Health Research, Partners in Evaluation & Research (PiER) Center



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**“Without stable shelter,  
everything else falls apart.”**

— Matthew Desmond  
*Evicted: Poverty and Profit  
in the American City*



## Housing is...

1

A **HEALTH** issue

2

A **SOCIAL JUSTICE &  
HUMAN RIGHTS** issue

3

An **EQUITY** issue

## Initial KP Medical-Legal Partnership Sites (2022 - 2023)



### California

#### KP NCal (2 Sites)

Partner: Legal Services of Northern California  
Service Areas: Sacramento & Vallejo

#### KP SCal

Partner: Neighborhood Legal Services of  
Los Angeles County  
Service Area: Los Angeles County



### Oregon

#### KP Northwest

Partner: Legal Aid Services of Oregon  
Service Area: Greater Portland



### Maryland

#### KP Mid-Atlantic States

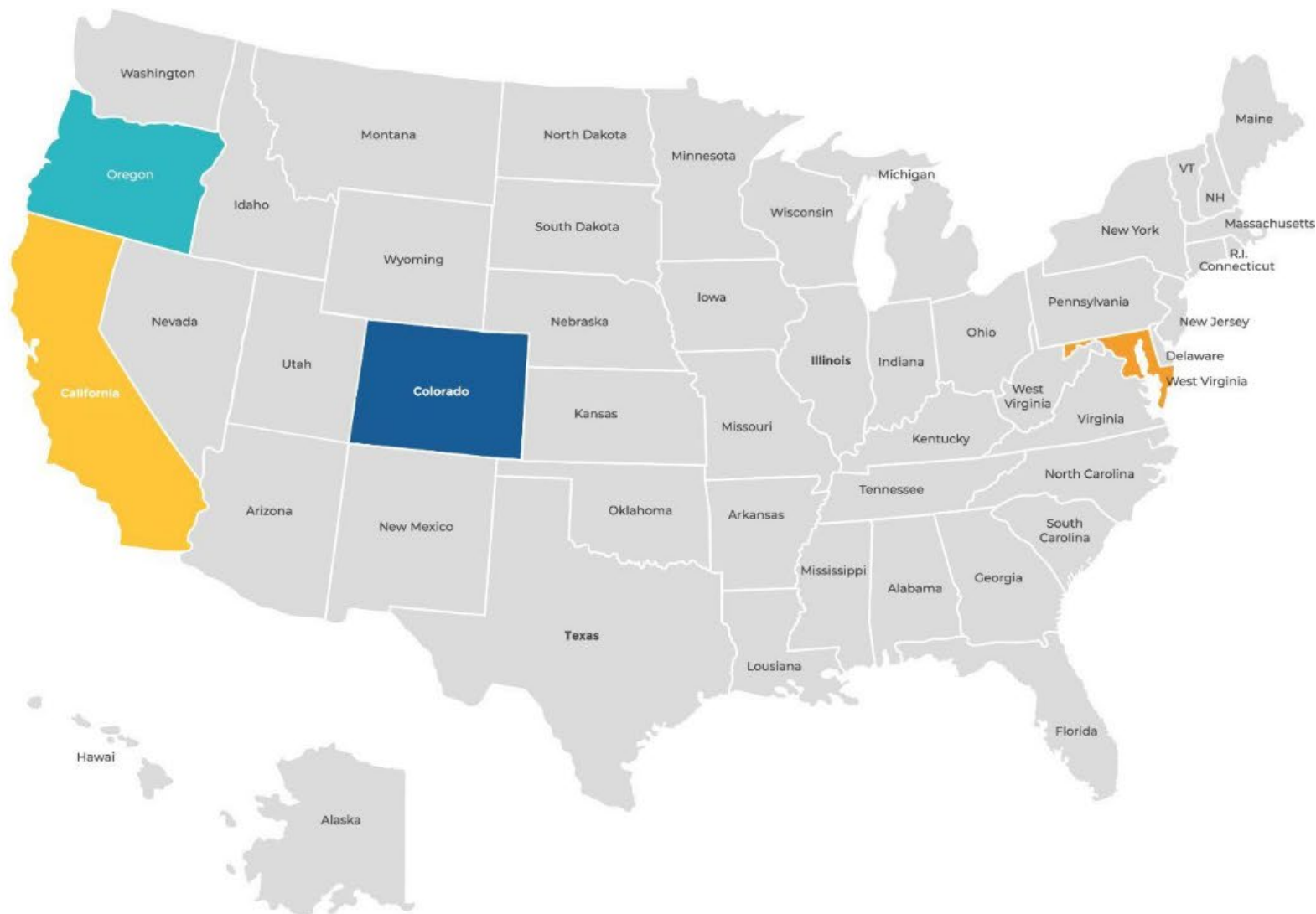
Partner: Maryland Legal Aid  
Service Area: Baltimore



### Colorado

#### KP Colorado

Partner: Colorado Legal Services  
Service Areas: Aurora & Denver





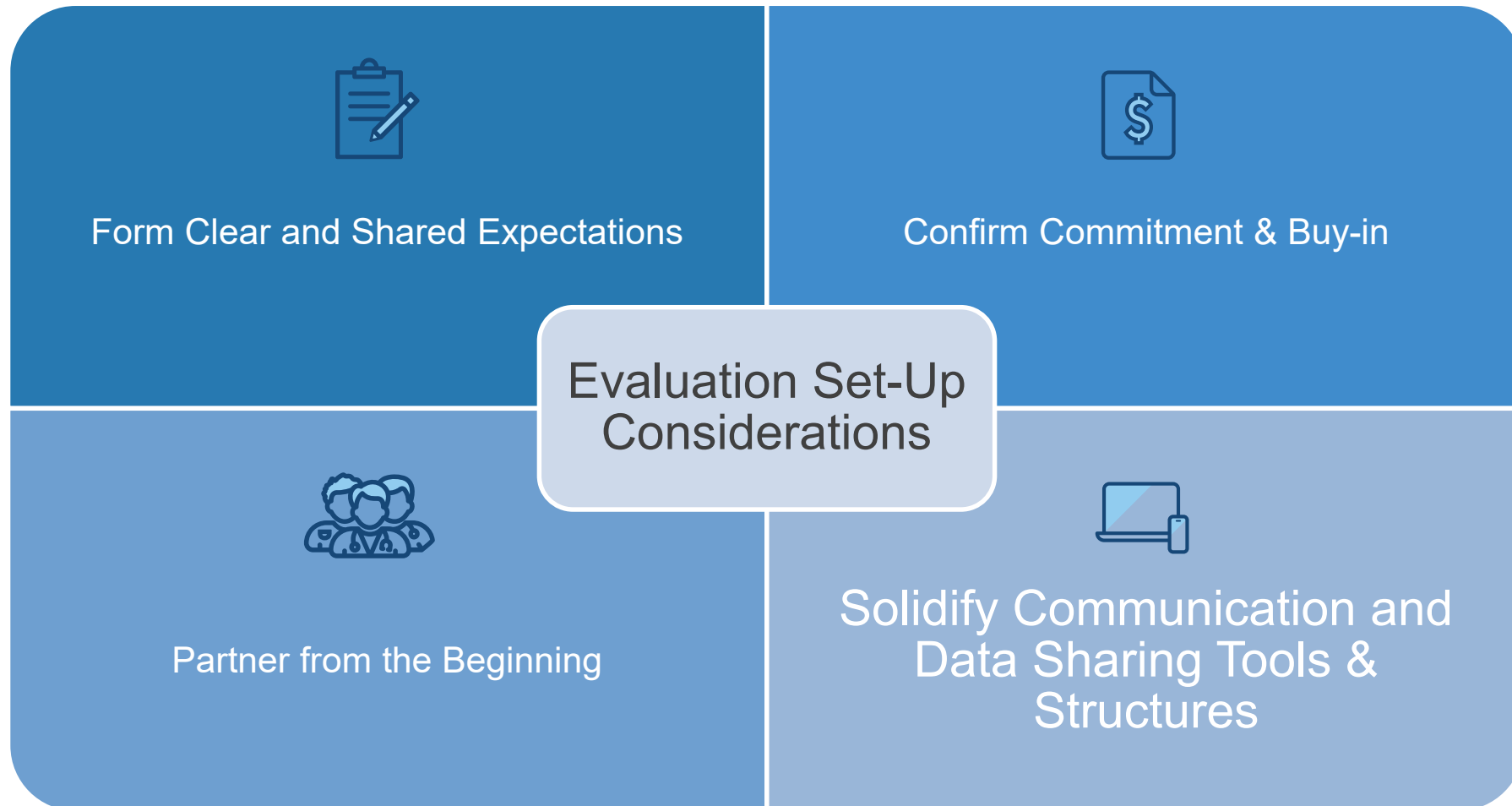
## What We Learned Part 1: Setting up an OUTCOMES EVALUATION

# Kaiser Permanente MLP Participant

“ Every few days they'd have an eviction notice on the door, which is embarrassing, you know...But all the things they were doing, it did get to my health... I'm still being treated for high blood pressure because that's when it all started. [Now] I feel like I'm able to go to the doctor more because I'm not worried that I'll come home and there will be an eviction notice on my door again. ”



# Setting up MLP evaluation-program partnerships





## Why Evaluate?

### **Ongoing learning from MLP evaluation:**

- Helps shape and improve program workflows and encourage patient participation
- Provides evidence that the MLP collaboration is efficient and effective
- Demonstrates appropriate and equitable reach, accountability, outcomes, and return on investment

## What We Learned Part 2 : Participant and System Outcomes

**As of July 2024:**

- **1,355** legal referrals were made on behalf of 1,200 unique KP members
- **789** cases have been opened (some open but not closed cases not reported)
- **707** cases have been closed
- **2,475** KP Members were reached by MLP Initiative (estimate of household members)



## Legal Services Provided

Member-level  
data

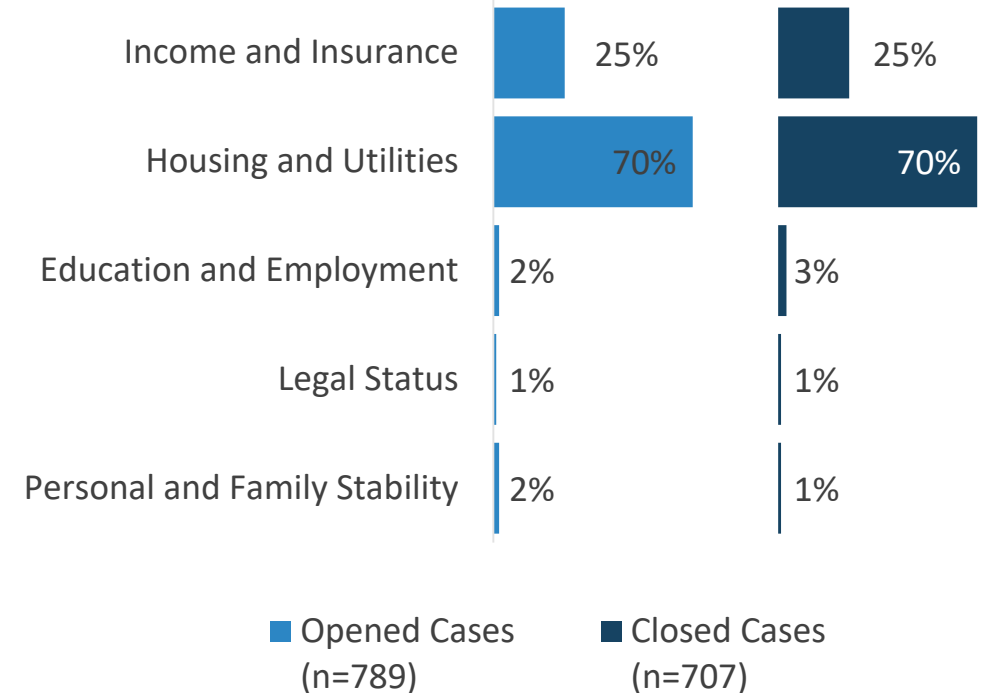
535 unique members are known to have received legal services.

Legal case-  
level data

789 legal cases were opened (443 unique members had linkable data showing an opened legal case).

707 legal cases were closed (300 unique members had linkable data showing a closed legal case).

## Legal Needs by I-HELP™ Category



# Legal Service Engagement

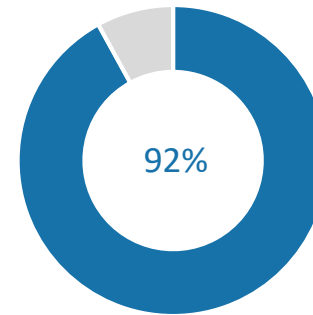


**90%** of open cases were closed by legal providers.



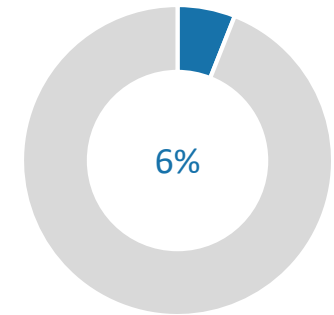
**77%** of legal issues were closed with fewer than 5 hours of services.

## Light-touch services



of cases received light-touch services such as counsel and advice or limited action

## Extensive services



of cases received extensive services such as negotiating settlements or court decisions

*\*2% of cases did not have legal assistance provided (14) or were missing a level of service (1).*

Participants reported that connection to legal services improved their **understanding of their legal rights and self-advocacy.**

"[Our attorney] had told us so much that we were able to handle the case ourselves in court...Even the judge was saying '**You negotiated this yourselves? You've done better than a lot of other people would have**', and so [our attorney] gave us very good advice."

**Satisfaction with Kaiser Permanente** healthcare and providers remained high.

"I've been reaching out to [KP] more for help, and **at first where I felt like helpless, I feel like now that I'm getting more help...** [my primary care doctor] really helped me regulate, and my pain level where before I was like out of 8-9. Now I'm like I would say like a 5-6, you know, like it's **my pain level is more manageable.**"

Interview participants reported improved **housing quality and stability**.

“We were able to move. **There's no eviction or anything like that on our credit** or anything. Nothing.”

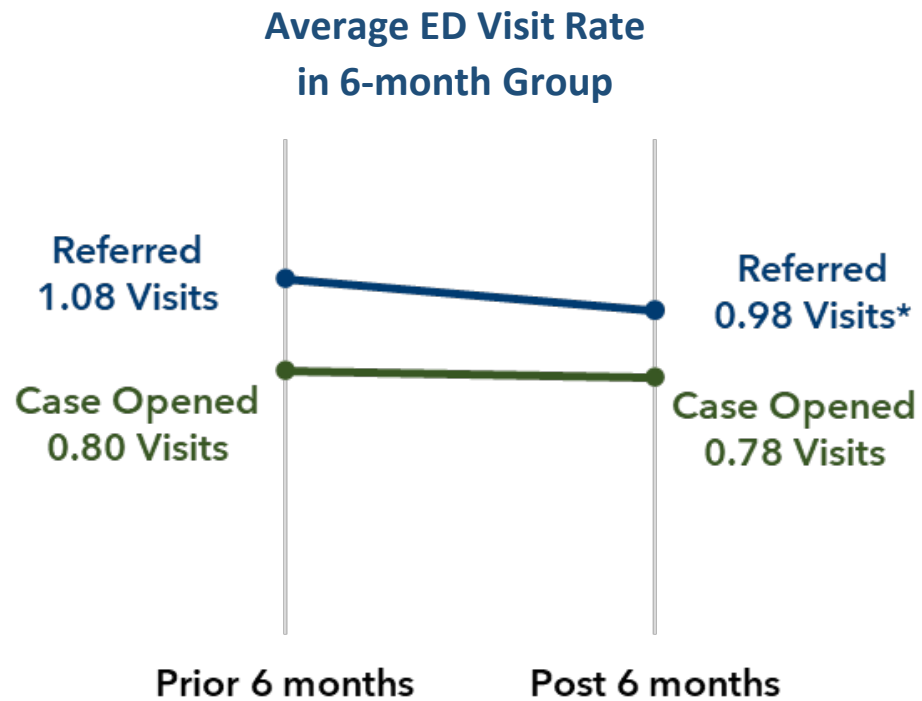
“It was embarrassing ‘cause where we were...I couldn't go up and down the stairs to shower. Kaiser helped us move and **now I can shower and now I can move around**. Now I **have a nice home for my children to play in** the front or the backyard.”

Interview participants reported improvements in their **physical and mental health**.

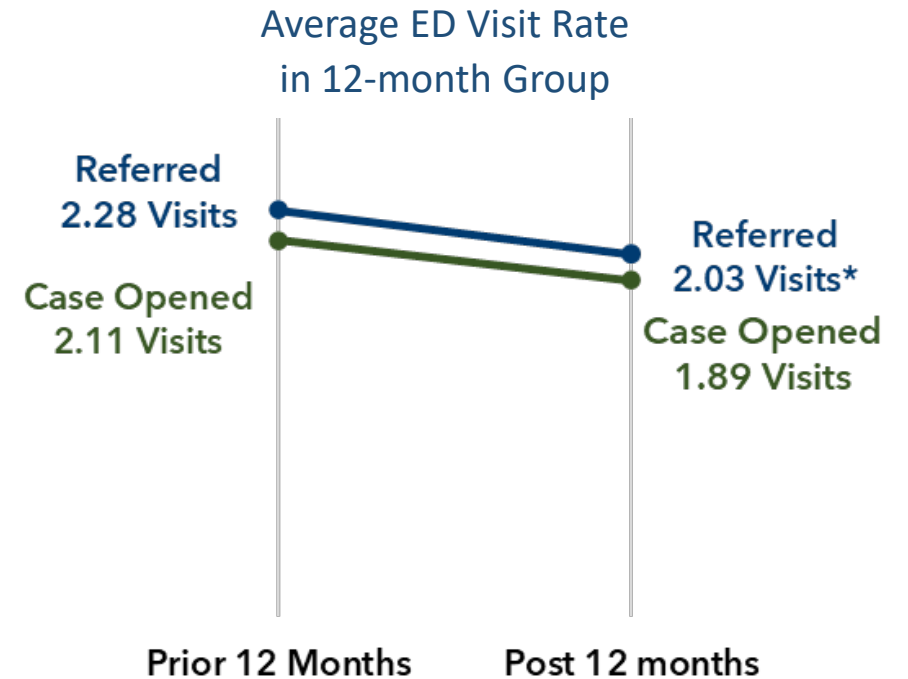
**“...at the time that [my legal issue] was going on, I really had a hard time with my health. There were some days I wouldn't wanna get out of bed or couldn't get out of bed.... My weight went down to 115 because I was stressed. I wasn't eating or anything, and now my weight is back to normal... while it was 115, if I would have gotten called for a transplant, I wouldn't get it because you have to have a minimum weight of 130. But when I got out of that apartment and all the stress about it... I started to get better.”**



# Impact on Healthcare System

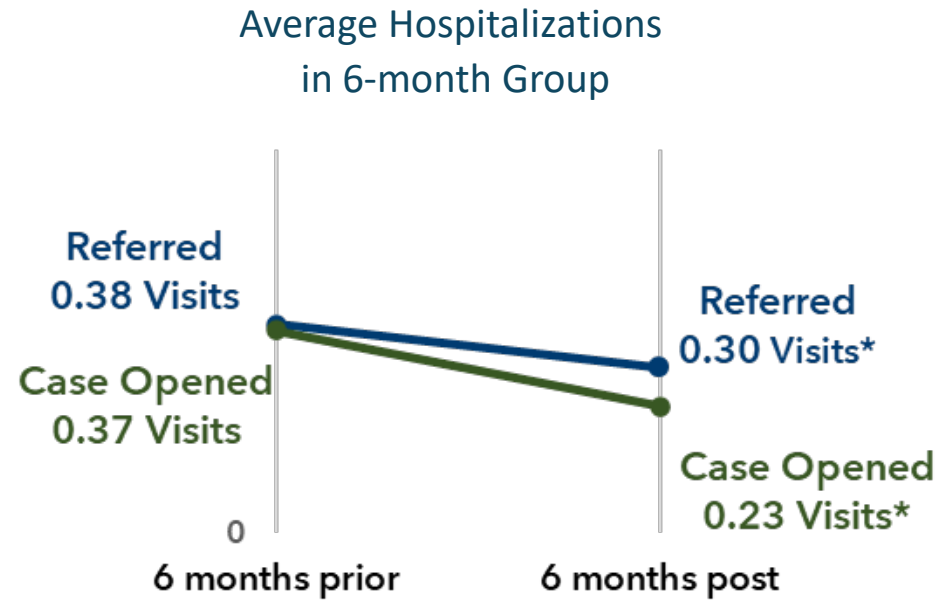


Average ED visits per person decreased by 9%\* for the 6-month referred group and by 2% for the 6-month group with an open legal case).

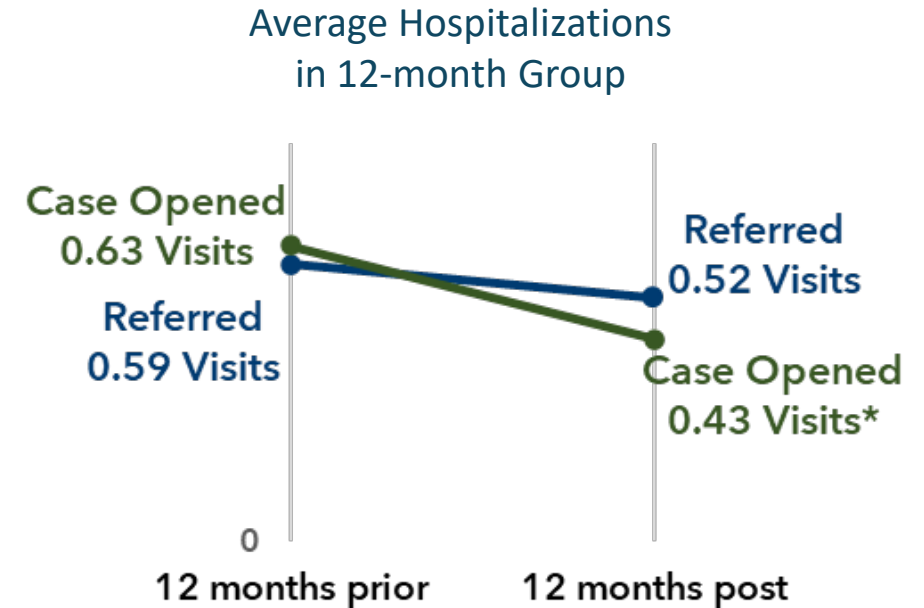


Average ED visits per person decreased by 11%\* for the 12-month referred group and by 10% for the 12-month group with an open legal case.

# Impact on Healthcare System



Average hospitalizations decreased by 21%\* for the 6-month referred group and by 38%\* for the 6-month group with an open legal case.



Average hospitalizations decreased by 12% for the 12-month referred group and by 32%\* for the 12-month group with an open legal case.



## GET INVOLVED!

- Connect with Texas MLP practitioners and stakeholders by joining the **Texas Medical-Legal Partnership Coalition**. Visit <https://www.txmlpc.org/newsletter>.
- Read the latest MLP news from the **National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership** at <https://medical-legalpartnership.org/about-us/newsletter/>.



### 2025 MLP Conference & Annual Member Meeting

**Topics:**

- Navigating the Future: Aligning with New Immigration Legislation and Updates in Texas
- Empowering Partnerships: Texas Legislative Changes Impacting Medical-Legal Partnerships in 2025
- And More!

**May 8-9, 2025**

**THURSDAY: RECEPTION & NETWORKING**  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

**FRIDAY: CONFERENCE & MEMBER MEETING**  
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

**Location:**  
TEXAS A&M HEALTH  
SCIENCE CENTER  
ROUND ROCK, TX