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Franny Zhang, Content Lead, MLPB

617-336-7500 x450

[fzhang@mlpboston.org](mailto:fzhang@mlpboston.org)

***In a COVID-19 landscape of unprecedented health risks and material hardship, MLPB convenes regional and national experts on strategies to bolster housing stability among families with children***

**Boston, MA:** Today, MLPB virtually convened over 200 cross-sector leaders to explore *Innovative Strategies to Promote Housing Stability Among Families with Young Children*. [This year's event](#) spotlighted approaches with promise for impact at the household, system and policy levels – many of which integrate legal problem-solving.

The COVID-19 pandemic has heightened awareness of deeply rooted, long-standing health disparities and health inequities -- and housing instability among families is poised to worsen as state of emergency-aligned eviction moratoria expire. According to event moderator **Baraka Floyd, MD, MSc** (Clinical Assistant Professor at Stanford School of Medicine and MLPB's *Unlocking Access* Consulting Lead): "Care teams are trying to help link families to crucial housing resources, but eligibility requirements and bureaucratic processes are really complicated, so welcoming trauma-informed legal specialists into the care team to demystify things is more important than ever." Added **Megan Sandel**, Co-Lead Principal Investigator at Children's HealthWatch at BMC and co-author of [a recent paper published in \*Health Affairs\*](#): "Our new research shows that families served by a team that integrated clinical, housing, and legal expertise experienced statistically significant improvements in child overall health and parent mental health at the 6-month mark when compared to the control group. This is a game-changer for family health."

Simultaneous with the event, MLPB released a report entitled [Partnering with Families Experiencing Housing Instability: Considerations for Interdisciplinary Teams Based in](#)

Massachusetts and Beyond, capping a year-long capacity-building initiative MLPB undertook with several partners in 2019 with support from The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation. “At a time when systems of care are being pressure-tested in profound ways,” remarked MLPB’s CEO Samantha Morton, “it’s essential that care teams and systems better understand families’ legal risks, rights and remedies, and are supported in ‘knowing their role’ when they try to help families. The stakes are higher than ever.”

Key recommendations from this new MLPB report – which builds an earlier June 2019 report entitled Unlocking Access: The Connections Between Medical Certifications and Health Equity – include:

- Extend multi-sector care teams’ access to legal specialists so that families’ legal risks, rights and remedies are front-and-center in housing instability problem-solving efforts.
- Expand the training, tools and infrastructure available to multi-sector workforces who partner with families experiencing housing instability and energy insecurity; highlight best practices for preparing medical certifications that can verify a household’s eligibility and ground this innovative capacity-building for workforces and systems in *structural competency*.
- Deepen capacity and accountability across agencies/companies that control families’ access to housing and energy resources so that fewer eligible families are denied the housing resources, benefits, and legal protections they seek.

**About MLPB:** MLPB believes in the power of justice to advance health, and in the urgency to democratize access to legal problem-solving tools. We equip health ecosystem partners with upstream problem-solving strategies that disrupt the evolution of a person’s social, economic or environmental need into a legal – and health – crisis. Through robust, prevention-oriented training, tools and technical assistance, MLPB helps workforce colleagues understand their unique capacities to *unlock access* to a range of health-promoting benefits, services and legal protections – thereby advancing health equity for individuals, families and communities. <http://www.mlpboston.org>

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