

LAET Starts Health-Law Partnership with Children's Hospital



KNOXVILLE (October 26, 2017) – Legal Aid of East Tennessee (LAET) has been awarded a 2017 Phase II Health Initiatives Grant from Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee. The grant will fund the establishment of a Children's Health Law Partnership (CHLP) in collaboration with East Tennessee Children's Hospital in Knoxville. Earlier this year, LAET and Children's Hospital studied various models across the country to determine the best fit for Children's Hospital and LAET. That study was funded by a Phase I planning grant from Trinity.

The CHLP project will place a legal aid attorney within the Children's Hospital complex. That attorney, with the support of the staff of LAET, will provide civil legal representation to low-income children and their families who are referred by the hospital's medical teams. The CHLP will focus on addressing legal matters impacting the health of patients, cross-training between the attorney and healthcare professionals, distributing legal education information, and documenting services and outcomes, including economic benefit to both patient families and the hospital.

“Study after study has demonstrated that sick children experience better health outcomes when doctors and lawyers work together to address the legal as well as the medical needs of patients and their families,” said LAET Executive Director Sheri A. Fox. “A classic example is the child who gets a lifesaving bone marrow transplant for leukemia, but can’t return home because the house where he and his family live has cockroaches that threaten his recovery. With the help of a lawyer, the family is able to legally terminate the lease and find new housing without losing the benefit of the housing vouchers upon which they rely. This new partnership between Children’s Hospital and LAET will enable this community to benefit from the same kind of powerful, holistic approach to caring for our precious children.”

“This is a service that our families often need,” added Children’s Hospital Vice President for Legal Services Cathy Shuck “Offering legal services to our patient families on site will provide easier access from an already trusted source—Children’s Hospital.”

Work will begin immediately on completing plans for opening the CHLP office. Legal staff for the project will be selected, and cross-training between legal and medical staff will occur. The CHLP will begin serving Children’s Hospital patients and their families by year end.

Debra House, LAET Director of Development and Compliance, and Cathy Shuck, Children’s Hospital Vice President for Legal Services, receive Legal Aid of East Tennessee’s Phase II award check from Trinity Health Foundation. Pictured from left are L. Daniel Pressley, Trinity Foundation board, Ms. House, Ms. Shuck, and J. Kay Clayton, Trinity Foundation board. photo credit: Courtesy of Trinity Health Foundation

For more information on this project, contact Bill Evans in LAET’s Knoxville office at (865) 637-0484.

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[Print](#)

[Table of Contents](#)

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