Leveraging a Law Firm Partner to Maximize Impact

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Ober|Kaler’s Partnership with Project HEAL

Project HEAL (Health, Education, Advocacy, and Law), a community-based program of the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities at Kennedy Krieger Institute, is Maryland’s only comprehensive medical-legal partnership (MLP). Project HEAL provides advocacy and legal services to Kennedy Krieger patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. The program offers representation in special education matters, appeals for denials of Supplemental Security Income, and simple family law matters. The program also provides limited representation for patients and families, case consultations with healthcare professionals and trainees, and professional and community trainings on a variety of legal topics.

Many MLPs partner with one or more law firms for pro bono legal assistance. However, Project HEAL attorneys identified other ways to leverage a law firm partnership to achieve more significant benefits for clients, increased collaboration with healthcare professionals and trainees, and enhanced participation by law firm attorneys, and greater sustainability for the MLP.

In five years, the attorneys at the Baltimore-based law firm of Ober|Kaler have provided significant support to Maryland’s only comprehensive MLP, including:

- Providing pro bono legal assistance
- Participating in federal legislative meetings
- Hosting a networking event
- Drafting letters of support for grant proposals
- Nominating Project HEAL for local, state, and national awards
- Authoring and printing an informational estate planning brochure for families raising children with disabilities
- Assisting with futures & estate planning informational sessions
- Hosting a futures & estate planning webinar
- Providing a special lecture for Kennedy Krieger healthcare professionals and trainees
- Co-presenting at a national conference
- Sponsoring an exhibitor booth for Project HEAL at a national conference
- Donating goods for fundraising efforts
- Attending fundraising events
- Providing advice to healthcare professionals and trainees during case consultation clinics
- Marketing of Project HEAL on law firm website

The benefits of engaging pro bono attorneys from law firm partners in their work include:

- Increased knowledge and understanding of the patients and families served
- Better outcomes for their clients
- Opportunity to work directly with the clients
- Collaboration with healthcare professionals and trainees
- Assistance with brochures, information sessions, webinars, and special lectures
- Increased sustainability of Project HEAL

Categories of Support

Case Support
- Pro bono cases
- Participation in case consultation clinics

Financial Support
- Letters of support for grant proposals
- Sponsor an exhibitor booth at a national conference
- Donations

Informational Support
- Federal legislative meetings
- Support informational brochures
- Support webinars
- Co-present at a national conference
- Community trainings

Pro Bono Subject Matter by Case Type

- Special Education: 55%
- Estate Planning: 25%
- SSI: 10%
- Lien Enforcement: 5%
- Immigration: 5%

For more information, visit our website at mcdd.kennedykrieger.org.