

THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS LEGAL CLINIC
MEDICAL-LEGAL PARTNERSHIP CLINIC
PROFESSOR KATY RAMSEY MASON

The Basics

COURSE NAME: Medical-Legal Partnership Clinic

GRADED CREDIT HOURS: Four (4) **REQUIRED:** No **ELECTIVE:** Yes

Course Pre-Requisites or Co-Requisites: Professional Responsibility and Evidence should be taken either before the clinic or concurrently with the clinic, although the requirement may be waived in certain circumstances. Requests for waiver should be made in the clinic application.

What is an MLP & what is Memphis CHiLD?

As described by the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership, medical-legal partnership (MLP) “integrates the expertise of health care, public health and legal professionals and staff to address and prevent health-harming social and legal needs for patients, clinics and populations. By partnering together, health care, public health and legal institutions transform the healthcare system’s response to social determinants of health.”

Memphis Children’s Health Law Directive (Memphis CHiLD) is the first MLP of its kind in the region. A collaborative effort among The University of Memphis Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law, Memphis Area Legal Services (MALS), and Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital, Memphis CHiLD focuses on identifying the legal and social issues that impact patient health and providing means to address these issues through direct legal services, education and advocacy for children and their families.

Course Description

Housed both in the Law School clinic space and in devoted space at Le Bonheur Children’s Hospital, law students participating in the MLP Clinic provide free legal assistance to low-income patients of Le Bonheur under the supervision of experienced MLP faculty, lawyers, and healthcare providers. Among other case-related assignments, MLP Clinic students conduct intake interviews, develop case strategies, conduct legal research, prepare legal documents, counsel clients, and provide representation in court and at administrative proceedings.

Although not an exhaustive list, the MLP Clinic provides legal services in the following **I-HELP** areas: **I**ncome and insurance (including public benefits and public and private health insurance), **H**ousing (including landlord-tenant matters and utilities), **E**mployment and education (including IEP’s), **L**egal status, and **P**ersonal and family safety (including family law matters and guardianships/conservatorships). In the last several semesters,

student cases have primarily involved TennCare (Medicaid) appeals, special education cases, and conservatorships.

The MLP Clinic also engages in education and training to health care professionals and the community, and students are expected to participate in and lead such trainings throughout the course of the semester.

To complement their casework, Clinic students participate in weekly interdisciplinary classroom sessions designed to explore the legal services they will be providing, the legal, policy and ethical issues that affect patients' health, and the ways that health outcomes and health care access for low-income children can be enhanced by bringing together health and legal professionals. Throughout their Clinic semester, students have the opportunity to work collaboratively with the faculty and staff of Le Bonheur Children's Hospital and to participate in joint class sessions with medical students and students from other health disciplines.

Course Enrollment and Credit

In order to be eligible for enrollment in the Medical-Legal Partnership Clinic, a student must have completed at least one-half of the legal studies required for graduation and be in good academic standing. Students earn four (4) hours of graded academic credit for their satisfactory completion of the Clinic course.

Time Requirements?

The Medical-Legal Partnership Clinic will meet for two (2) hours of regularly scheduled classroom time each week. Extra orientation sessions will be scheduled during the first four weeks of classes to ensure proper introduction to the Clinic's work. Clinic students will be expected to spend fifteen (15) hours per week on case-related activities. One or more of those fifteen (15) hours may be spent in a joint case review or legal skills building sessions.