Medical-Legal Partnerships
An Overview of Current Activities

Phase I: Denver Health MLP
Denver Public Health initially convened a group of stakeholders, including MHHA, to work with them to pilot an MLP focused on housing at two Denver Health clinics – Westside Pediatrics and the Intensive Outpatient Clinic. Legal partners included Colorado Legal Services, the Colorado Poverty Law Project and the DU Student Law Office as well as Denver Health. An overview of the pilot and results were presented in 2018 at Public Health in the Rockies.

Phase II: Denver MLP
As the MLP project developed, and with some staff transitions, MHHA took on an expanded role for the MLP, looking to scale the project beyond Denver Health clinics. MHHA received a grant from the Next 50 Initiative to pilot the MLP at an additional two locations, focusing on the elder population aged 50 – 64. We will be working with one Denver Health clinic and one MHHA member clinic. Colorado Legal Services, Denver Public Health, and Colorado Poverty Law Project are all partners in this project.

Health Equity Advocacy Cohort: Denver Public Health and MHHA are joint Network Strengthening Partners of Health Equity Advocacy Cohort funded by the Colorado Trust. The Cohort identified housing as an urgent and critical priority, and created a “Housing Small Group” to work on advocacy and policy solutions. MHHA participated in the HEA Cohort and the Housing Small Group, helping to develop and review the report, Home Equity: A Vision of Housing Security, Health and Opportunity. MLPs are included as one of the 11 policy recommendations in the report.

Regional MLP Convening: MHHA and Denver Public Health, as part of our work with the HEA Cohort, held a regional summit on MLPs in October 2019. Our goal was to bring together interested stakeholders from MLPs past, present, and future to establish a learning community that works toward alignment and resolution around issues such as data collection, workflow, referral systems, sustainability, and policy. We included as part of the summit connecting with on-the-ground organizers, such as 9-to-5 National Association of Working Women, Colorado Chapter in addition to medical and legal professionals.
**Metro Area Health Alliances:** While the nature of health alliances is to be hyper local, there are issues that require a regional approach. Since January 2018, MHHA has been convening the seven health alliances (Adams, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson Counties and the City of Aurora) in the metro area to identify areas of aligned priorities. Housing surfaced as a top issue, and we have been pursuing funding for a shared approach to a housing MLP in the region. Tri County Health Department and Aurora Health Alliance previously worked together to address mold issues in hotels along East Colfax, which are often used as temporary housing.

**9 to 5 National Association of Working Women (Colorado):** 9-to-5 has been responsible for much of the on-the-ground tenant organizing on housing stability and safety in the metro area. Initially focused on mobile home communities, they are expanding their work to apartment complexes as well. MHHA has had ongoing discussions 9-to-5 to figure out how to coordinate MLP work in the health sector with issues emerging from their tenant organizing, and how these efforts can mutually reinforce and benefit each other.

**Other MLP Efforts**

**Salud Health Centers:** Salud has an MLP that has been supported through pro bono efforts of Pia Dean and some funding from their Regional Accountable Entity (RAE). Housing has emerged as the most frequent request from patients.

**University Hospital:** MHHA is part of the MLP Community Advisory Group at University Hospital, headed by Shale Wong, which is pursuing a “reboot” of the Children’s Hospital MLP in addition to considering other MLP expansions statewide using tele-legal. University is considering using the additional Upper Payment Limit funding received by University as at least a partial funding source.

**Additional Considerations**

Until recently, the legal partners working with us on MLPs were hamstrung by the relatively weak rights of tenants in Colorado statute. With the passage of several housing-related bills during the 2019 legislative session, notably *Time to Cure Lease Violations* and *Residential Tenant Health and Safety Act*, tenants and our legal partners now have much better leverage with landlords to address safety and stability issues.