

California Health Improvement Project (CHIP)

The Lawyer Will See You Now: Implementation of a Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) for High Utilizer Patients in the Veterans Administration

Rishi Manchanda, MD, MPH
VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

Unmet legal and social needs: Healthcare's blind side

Homeless Veterans experience poor health and housing outcomes due to lack of effective legal assistance.

- Nationally, at least eight of the top ten unmet needs among homeless Veterans seeking VA care are related to legal barriers, including*
 - Prevention of eviction/foreclosure; outstanding warrants/fines; child support issues; reinstatement of driver's licenses; family reconciliation issues; financial guardianship; housing for registered sex offenders; and military discharge upgrades.
- Nearly 6000 homeless Veterans in Greater Los Angeles on any given night, with growing demand for legal services and major cost drivers due to avoidable ED and inpatient care.
- Nearly 300 hospitals nationwide employ a Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) model to address unmet legal needs, but the VA lacks a systematic approach to address civil legal needs.

*2013 VA CHALENG survey)

Wasteful Care
Unmet legal & social needs impact Quadruple Aim



High Value Care
'Upstream' care through Medical-Legal Partnerships

Project: A Medical-Legal Partnership to advance Quadruple Aim in the VA

This project will improve outcomes, value, patient and provider experience for high utilizer, high need homeless Veterans in the Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System using a Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP) model and an "upstream quality improvement" approach developed by HealthBegins.

Project Goals and Objectives

Goal: Improve value of care and outcomes for high utilizer, high-need homeless Veterans in the Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System through a Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP)

Output-oriented Objective:

By April 2014, an MLP will be established within an intensive multidisciplinary homeless primary care team structure. .

Outcome-oriented Objective:

By Jan 2015, demonstrate 10% reduced ED utilization, 10% improvement in legal outcomes, and at least \$1000 value generated per high-need Veteran engaged in the MLP pilot.

Outputs & Outcomes

Outputs: Implementation of MLP at GVA

- Established first MOU between GLA VA and a public interest law firm despite a contentious political environment.
- Fully integrated MLP with 1.2 FTE lawyer within ambulatory intensive caring unit (AICU) program for high-utilizer, high-need homeless Veterans.
- Provided full case representation to 139 Veterans during initial 6 month pilot period.
- Expanded MLP legal capacity for over 2500 homeless Veterans using a lawyer - social worker "specialty champion" model.

Outcomes Achieved:

Veterans Served with Full Representation	139
ER encounters % change *pre/post 6 months in AICU clinic	- 24%
Average VA Cost Per Veteran	\$84.90
Average Legal Aid Cost Per Veteran	\$439.99
Average Total Cost Per Veteran	\$524.89
Estimated Legal Value of Services (Annualized)	\$503,407
Average Yield Per Veteran* *excluding value associated with changes in healthcare utilization	\$3,621.63

Scale & Sustainability

- Co-chaired VA Center for Innovation (VACI) initiative to expand MLP model to 10 VA Medical Centers to serve approximately 12,000 Veterans over a 2.5 year time frame (2016- 2018)

Proposed cost of expansion: \$19.4 million

Anticipated value: \$83.9 million for Veterans



Lessons Learned

Apply "Upstream Quality Improvement"

To help achieve the Quadruple Aim, health care systems need dedicated

- Staff (e.g. 'upstreamists')
- Systems (i.e. business processes)
- Solutions, such as the Medical-legal Partnership model

to routinely understand and address social and legal determinants of health.

Create & Leverage Early Wins:

Without clear, achievable short term objectives, it is hard to generate momentum for change in business.

Make Benefits Clear:

For instance, moving VA healthcare upstream through a MLP model at 10 sites would generate \$83.9 million in direct value for Veterans.



About VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System

The VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System (VAGLAHS) is the largest healthcare system within the Department of Veterans Affairs, with 3 ambulatory care centers, a tertiary care facility & 10 community based outpatient clinics, serving 1.4 million Veterans residing throughout 5 counties: LA, Ventura, Kern, Santa Barbara, & San Luis Obispo.

VA GREATER LOS ANGELES HEALTHCARE SYSTEM



A Division of VA Desert Pacific Healthcare Network

VACI identifies, tests, & evaluates new approaches to the agency's most pressing challenges, ensuring a steady flow of high value innovations from concept to implementation within the nation's largest civilian cabinet agency.



Contact Me

For more information, contact me:
Rishi Manchanda MD MPH
Founder, HealthBegins
Chief Medical Officer, The Wonderful Company
Rishi.Manchanda@wonderful.com

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