

Medico-Legal Partnerships Advocating for Climate Vulnerable Patients

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HealthCare Providers are Uniquely Positioned to Advocate for Underserved Populations

- See direct impacts of climate on health
- However, many clinicians are not aware of what actions they can take that can make a direct impact on their climate vulnerable patients.

What is a Medical-Legal Partnership (MLP)?

- An upstream approach to health care in which a lawyer is added to the health care team to address patients' social determinants of health (SDOHs) through legal intervention
- **Training** teams to work to identify SDOH
- **Treating** patients' existing SDOH with legal interventions ranging from consultations to full representation
- **Transforming** clinic practice and institutional policies to better respond to patients' SDOH
- **Preventing** SDOH more broadly by detecting and improving policies that impact population health



MLP Project to Develop Letter Templates for Climate Vulnerable Patients

Expanding clinicians' toolkit

Available to clinicians outside of MLPs

Crafted by lawyers attentive to FL and national law



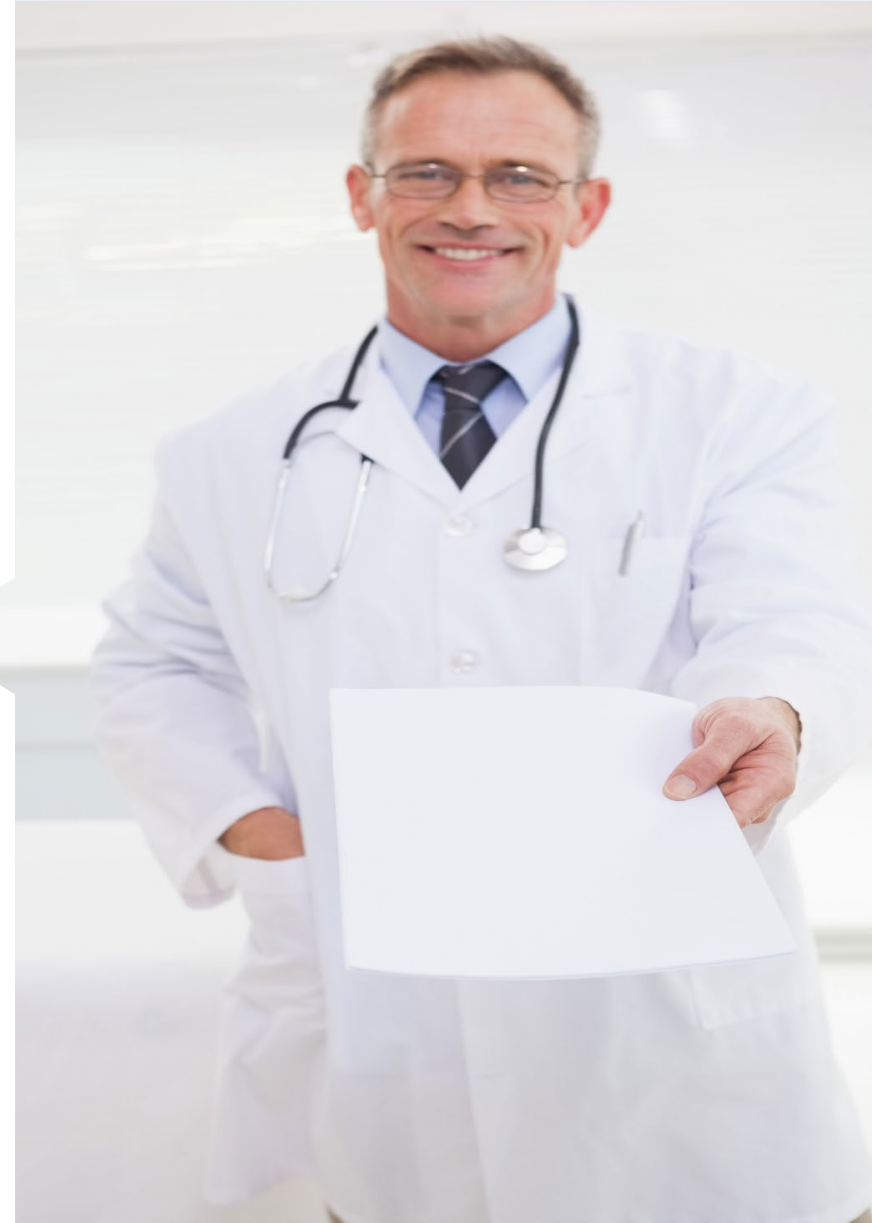
REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN EDUCATION (ex- phys ed outdoors)



REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT (ex – shade, water breaks, outdoor heat limits)



REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS IN HOUSING (repair of cooling agents, early termination of leases if home conditions unhealthy)



HOUSING

Reasonable Accommodation Request to Terminate Lease



- Early termination due to poor housing conditions (i.e. mold, rodent or pest infestation)
 - Request must state an individual is disabled, accommodation is necessary, and connection between the two
 - Accommodation must be reasonable
 - Example: A patient with asthma living in a mold-affected unit affecting a major life activity (breathing, sleeping, etc.)
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HOUSING :

Reasonable Accommodation Request for Cooling Agent Repair

- Cooling agent: A/C, ceiling fan, or similar object
- Request must state an individual is disabled, accommodation is necessary, and connection between the two
- Example: A patient with seizure disorder requesting repair of A/C to prevent seizures triggered by heat
- Related example -
Hurricane Irma 2017
Nursing home deaths

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/newswp-content/nation/2019/08/27/florida-nursing-home-hurricane-irma-4-charged-12-deaths/2136076001/>





Reasonable Accommodation Request in Employment

- Under the Americans with Disabilities Act disability is defined as an individual with “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities”
- Any change to the job, the way the job is done, or the work environment that allows a person with a disability who is qualified for the job to perform the essential functions of that job
- Example: Patient who works in job with increased sun exposure needing breaks under a shaded area – construction/landscaping/agriculture/street vendors/park employees.

EDUCATION

Reasonable Accommodation Request for phys ed/ school athletics participation

- Children more prone to overheating and suffering harms from climate change when outdoors especially in Florida
- Between 1996 to 2006, ER visits for heat illnesses increased by 133% - half of these pts were children/teens.
- Children with pre-disposing conditions – asthma, obesity – increased risk for complications
- Letter -request reasonable accommodations for physical education participation :
 - Ample access to water
 - Shade
 - Rest
 - Suggest cooling technologies such as misting stations/ fans



For More Information

- [Contact Fred Anderson at fwanders@fiu.edu](mailto:fwanders@fiu.edu)
or phone at 305-348-4840
- [Training video for clinicians at](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CIWxfJle04)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CIWxfJle](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CIWxfJle04)
[04](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CIWxfJle04)

Training sessions may be arranged

THANK YOU!!