

Why Doctors Need Lawyers:



Cases from the Seattle Medical Legal Partnership for Children

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Health disparities & vulnerable populations



Health disparities & vulnerable populations

Increased Risk

- Poverty
- Poor housing quality
- Environmental exposures
- Poor nutrition/ food insecurity
- Safety concerns



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Development
of illness

Severity of
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Healthcare



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Healthcare



Development of illness

Severity of illness

Policy & Advocacy

social history

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**inventory of personal
health behaviors**





**Childcare &
Education**

**Stability &
Safety**

**Housing &
Utilities**

**Employment
& Income**

Food

**Immigrant
Status**

**Health Care
Access**

**Child and
Family Health**

Unmet Legal Needs

At OBCC and HMC

93 %

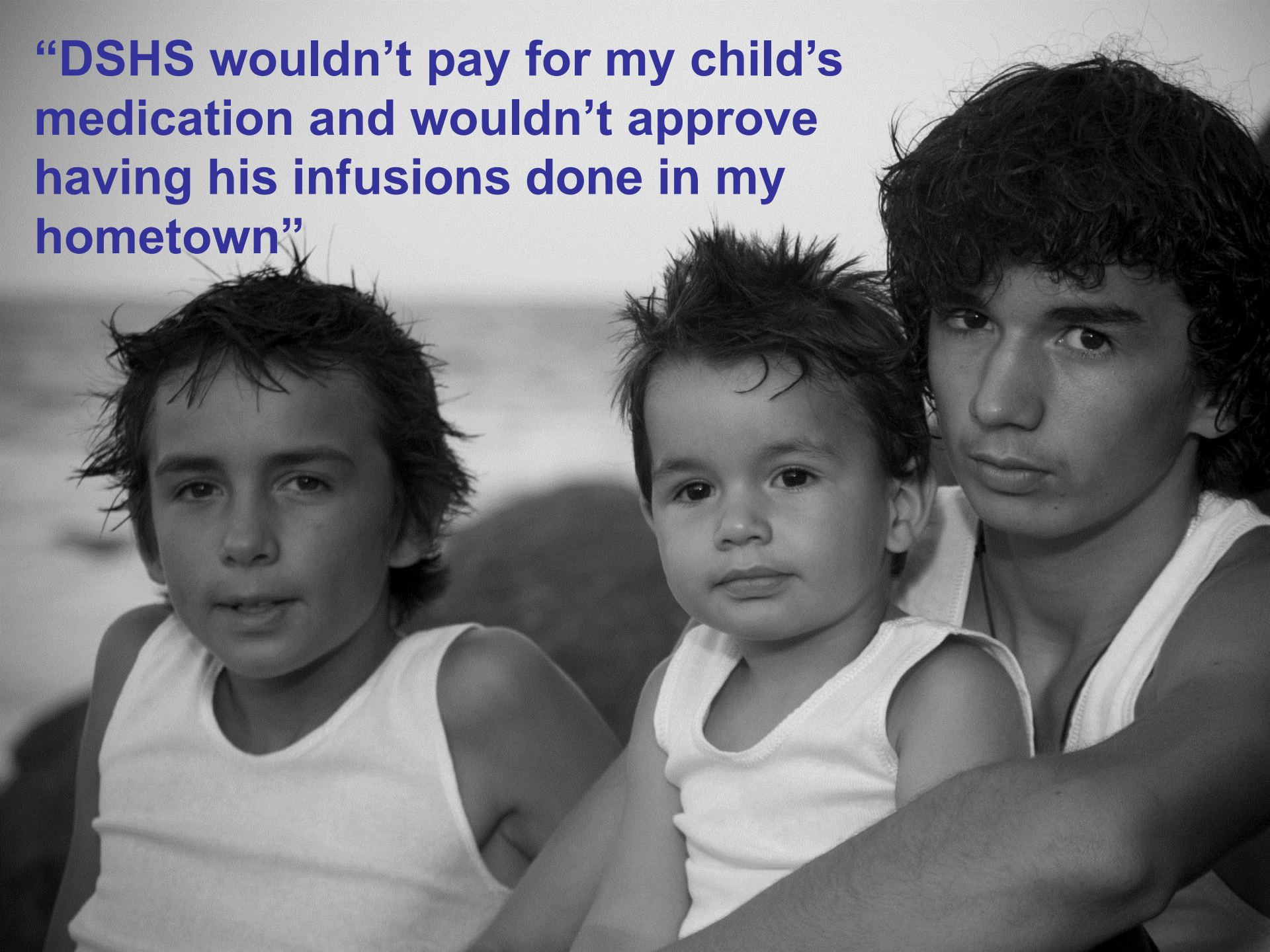
had at least 1 unmet legal need

Average number of
identified legal needs:

5.6

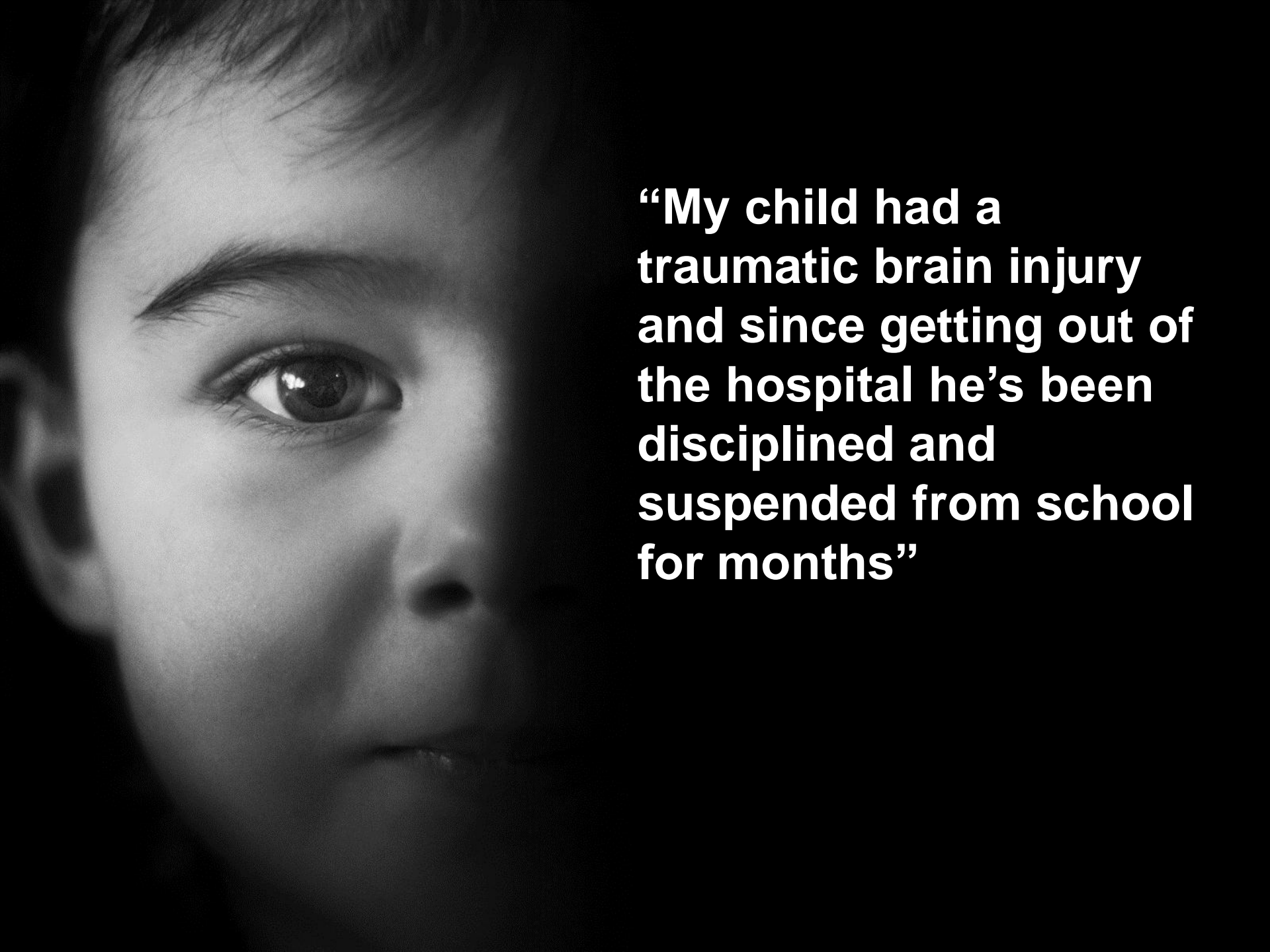


“DSHS wouldn’t pay for my child’s medication and wouldn’t approve having his infusions done in my hometown”



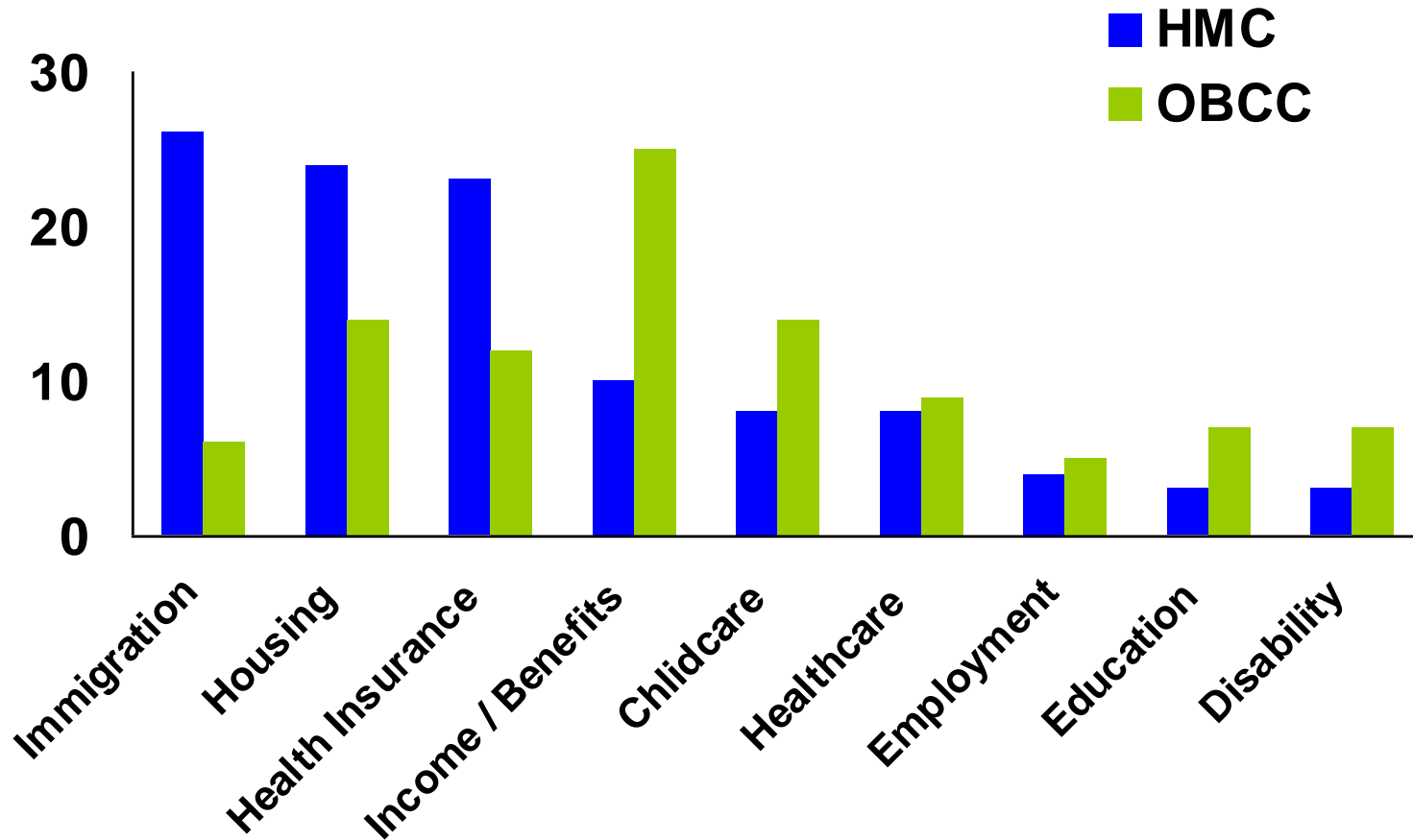
**“I can’t
approve my
grandchild’s
surgery until I
get a court
order”**



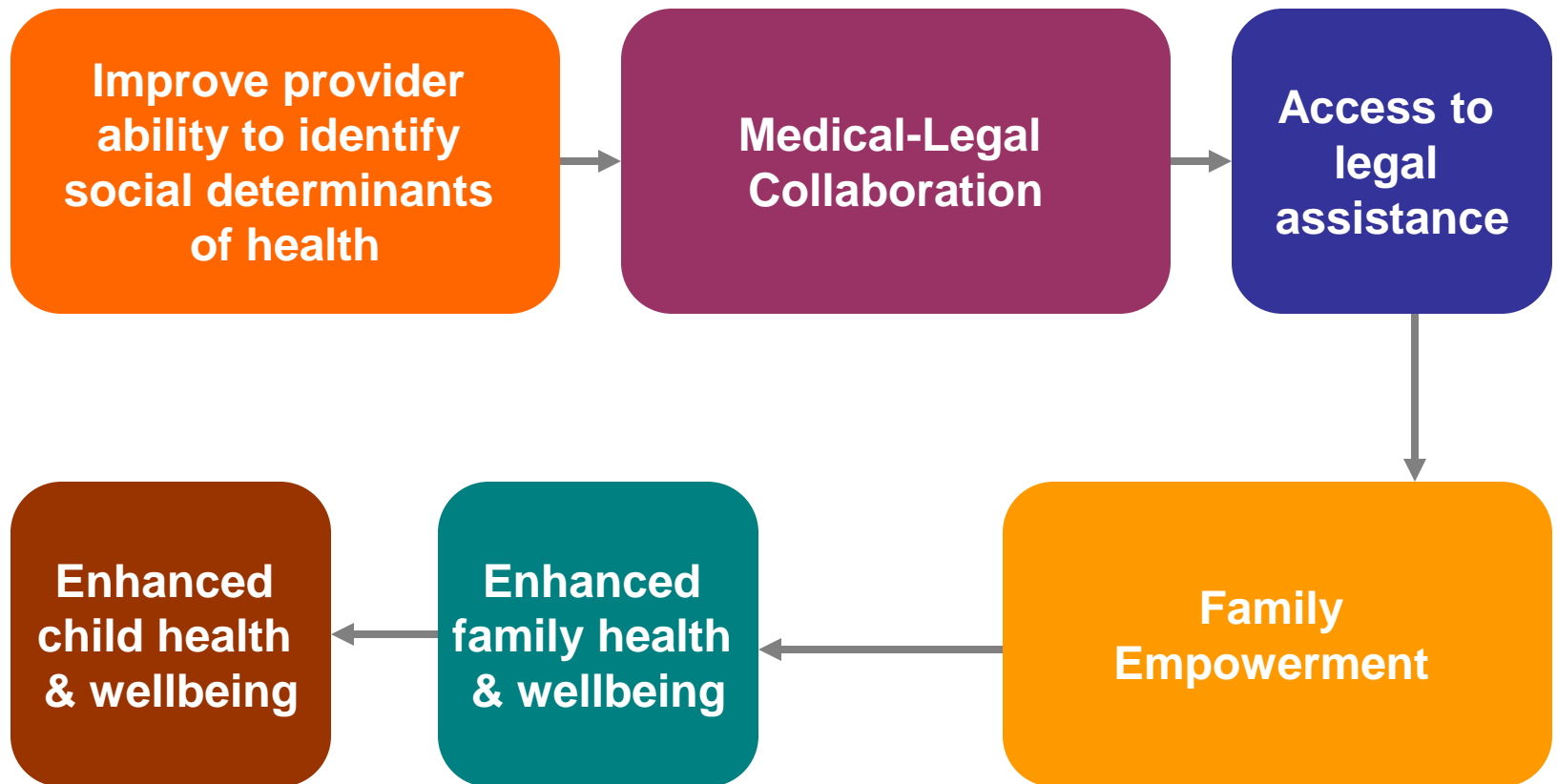


“My child had a traumatic brain injury and since getting out of the hospital he’s been disciplined and suspended from school for months”

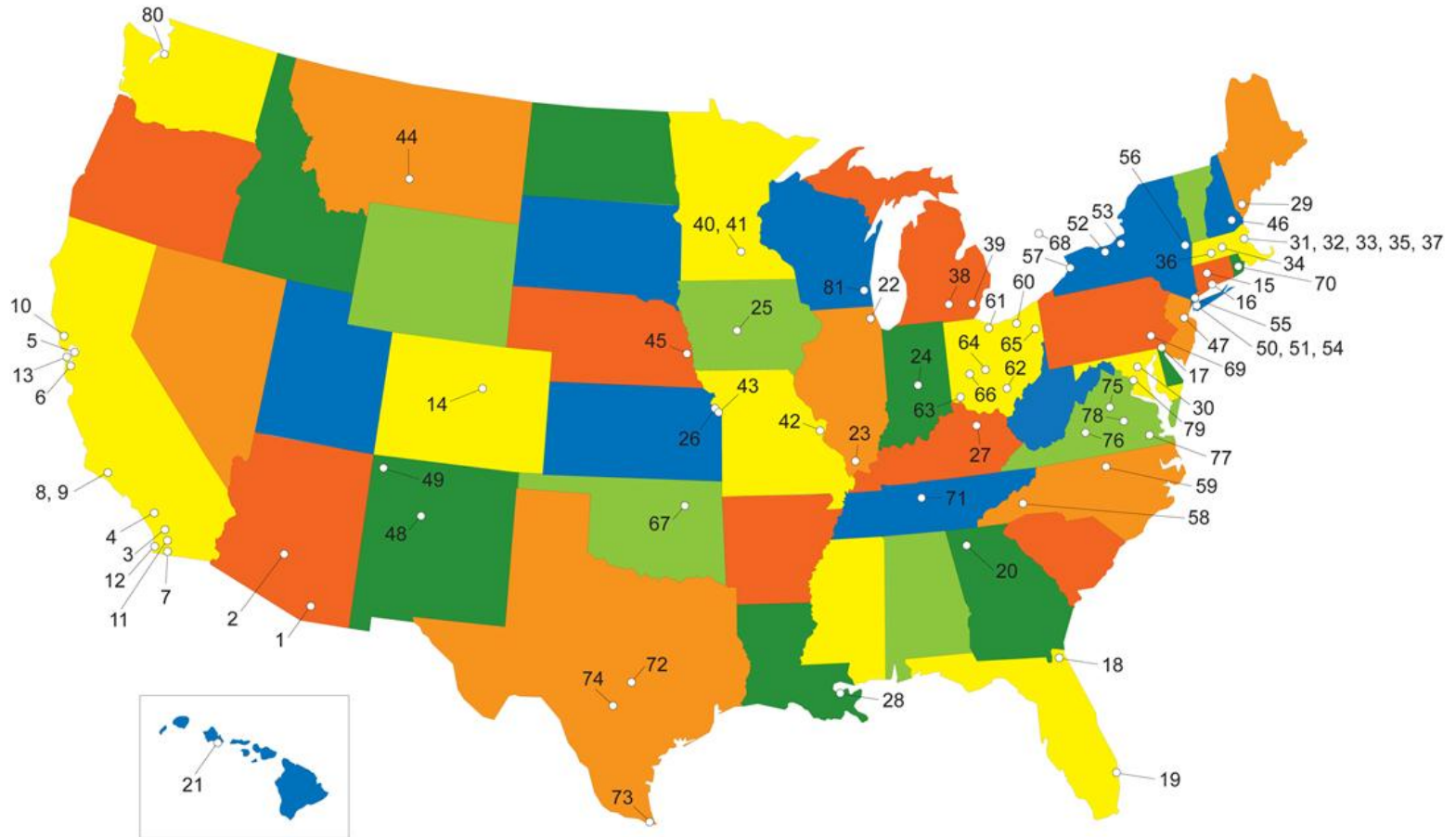
% families identifying legal need as “most important”



Uncoupling Poverty and Poor Health



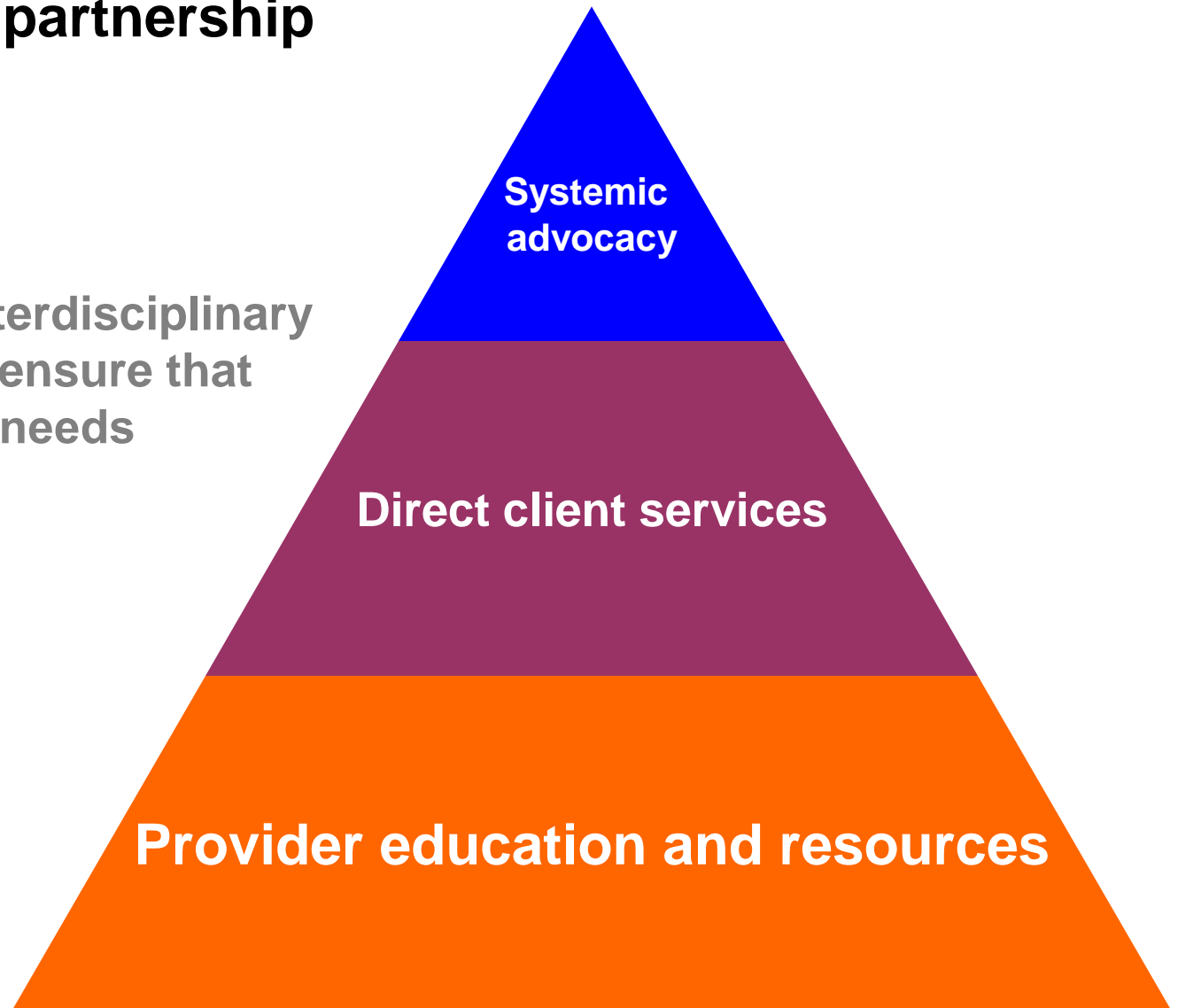
The MLP Network – March 2009



**81 partnerships in over 180
hospital and health centers**

MLPC Seattle's tiered model of medical-legal partnership

MLPC fosters interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure that children's basic needs are met



Keep in mind ...

Social factors influencing child health can be addressed through protection of legal rights

If you ask about basic needs, families will talk about them

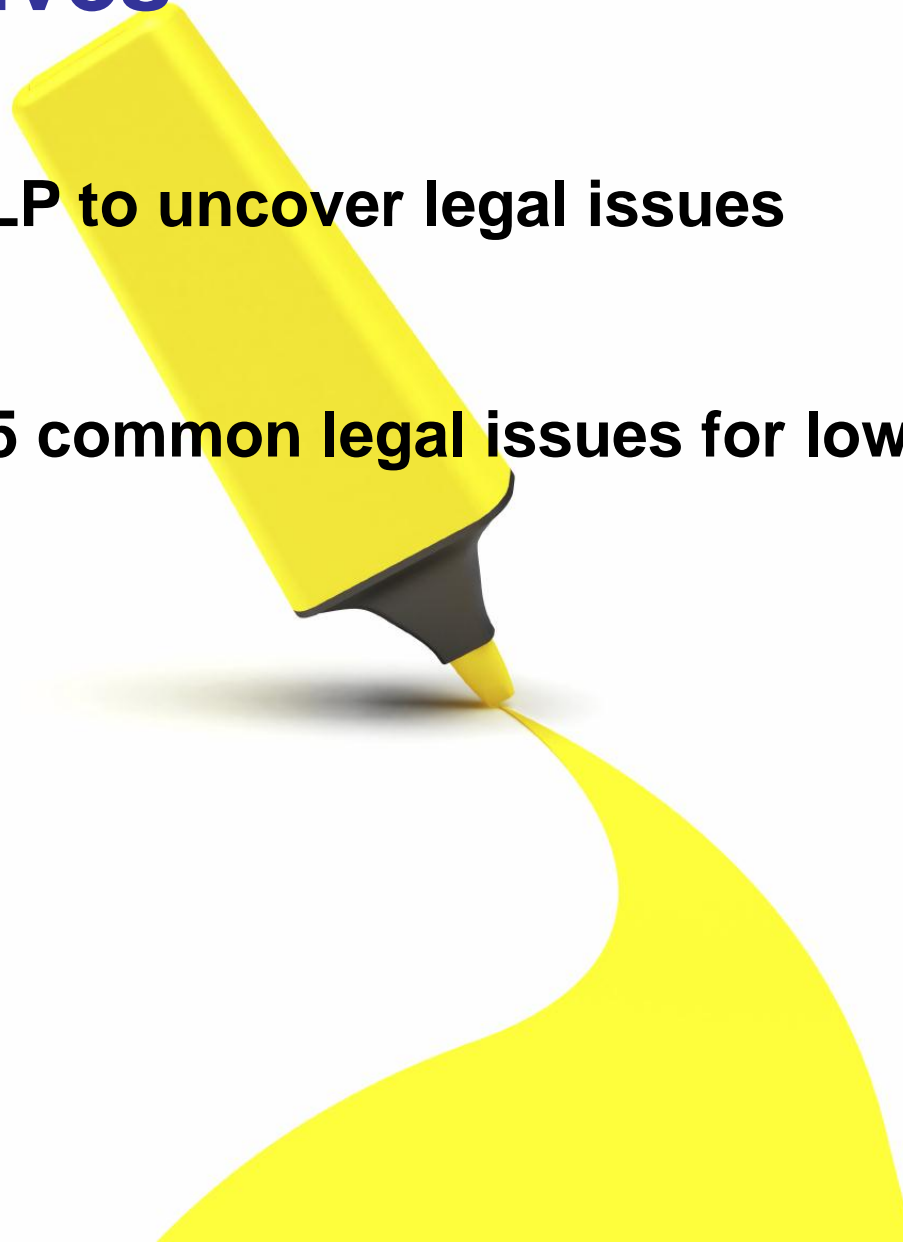
If you uncover unmet basic needs, you can help families by mobilizing legal resources and making referrals

Cases from the files
of the Seattle MLPC

Objectives

Use IHELP to uncover legal issues

Identify 5 common legal issues for low-income patients



**IHELP:
Screening for legal needs**





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Income: how is your family meeting its needs?



IHELP: Screening for legal needs

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Housing: does your family have problems with shelter?



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Legal status: are you concerned about immigration status?



IHELP: **Screening for legal needs**

Income: how is your family meeting its needs?

Housing: does your family have problems with shelter?

Education: does your child have problems at school?

Legal status/language: are you concerned about immigration status or language access?

Personal safety: are there issues of family violence?

Junior





Junior

What can you do for this family?



Junior

Housing: What can be done about the family's housing problems?



Junior

**Legal Status, Personal Safety:
Why is Mom afraid of Junior living
with his father if she is deported?**

Lessons learned:

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Government agencies (e.g. housing authorities, DSHS) cannot **deny** or **terminate** a benefit without prior notice to the recipient and **an opportunity to respond**. These benefits include welfare, food stamps, medical benefits, and housing assistance.

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Victims of **crime** or **domestic violence** who are undocumented may be able to gain legal status by petitioning to the government or assisting in the prosecution of the crime