

Community Legal Aid Partners with UMass Memorial

“This new medical-legal partnership will provide legal services to patients through an innovative new primary care model at three UMass Memorial Medical Center clinics that serve a high number of Medicaid patients. The goal is better health outcomes for some of the most vulnerable families and individuals in Central Massachusetts using a community health framework that integrates care coordination and behavioral health into the primary care setting. It will add legal services providers, including pro bono private attorneys, to the clinical care team to help address such legal barriers to good health as substandard housing, access to benefits, etc.” – communitylegal.org (press release)



What is Community Legal Aid?

“Civil legal aid provides free legal help with non-criminal problems such as evictions, foreclosures, domestic violence, unfair consumer practices, and access to disability benefits.”

Civil legal aid:

- Legal aid and representation regardless of financial status
- Provides guidance and education to community about rights and state benefits
- Provides information and easy access forms for clients to help translate and navigate through the legal process
- “Helps people to protect their livelihoods, their health, and their families”

Needs Assessment

An interdisciplinary coalition of students from University of Massachusetts Schools of Medicine and Nursing conducted a needs assessment at the following locations:

- Nashaway Pediatrics, Clinton Hospital
- Benedict Family & Adult Medicine, UMASS University Campus
- Benedict Pediatrics Primary Care, UMASS University Campus

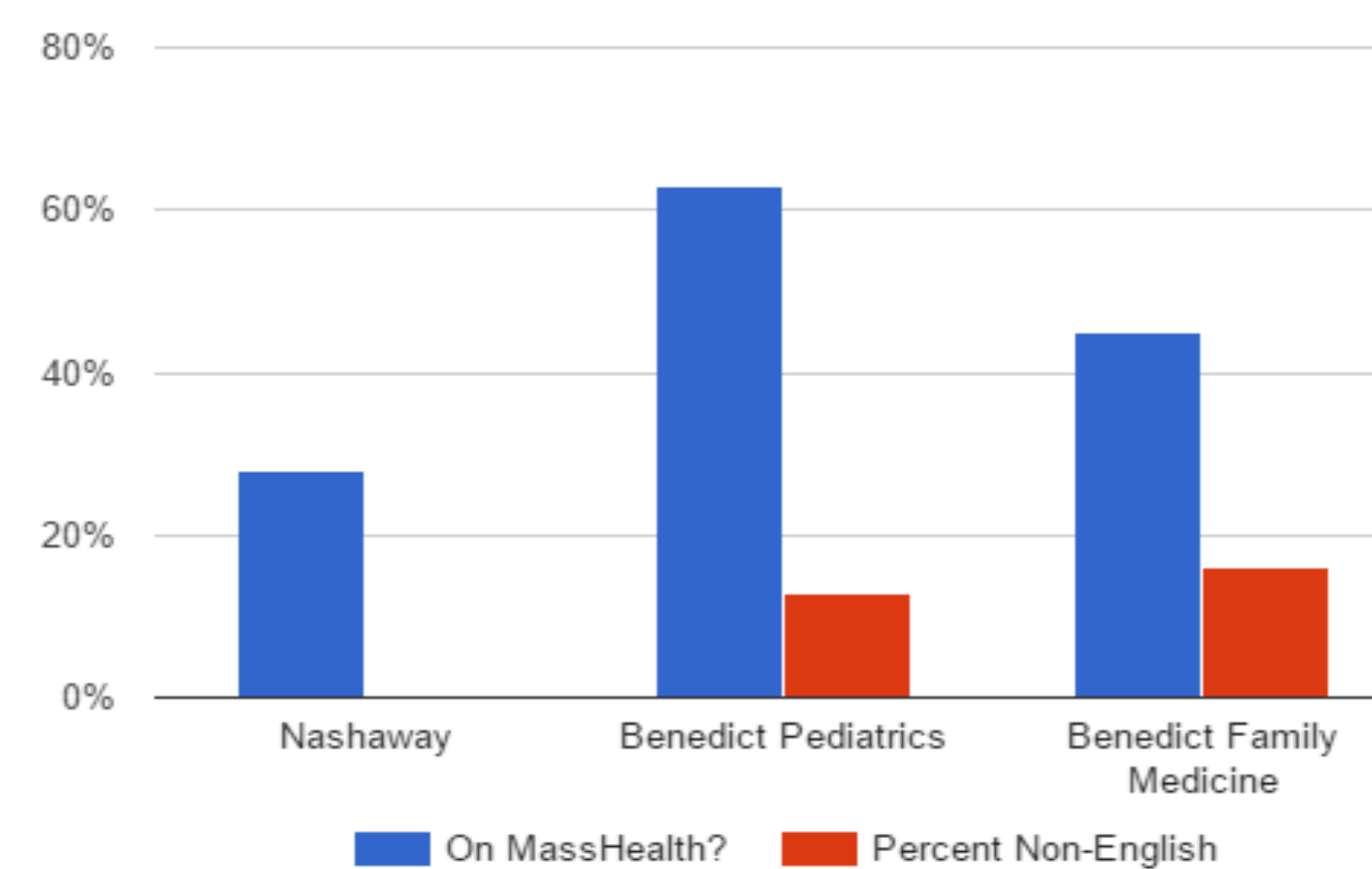
Goals of Needs Assessment:

- Identify unmet legal needs of our community



Initial Data Collection

Figure 1: Demographics



Clinic	Greatest Concerns (in order of magnitude)
Nashaway Pediatrics	Bills > Health Insurance = Disabled Child > Food = Childcare
Benedict Pediatrics	Disabled Child > Bills > Food > Housing
Benedict Family Medicine	Health Insurance > Food > Activities of Daily Living > Bills

Figure 2: Top needs across all sites

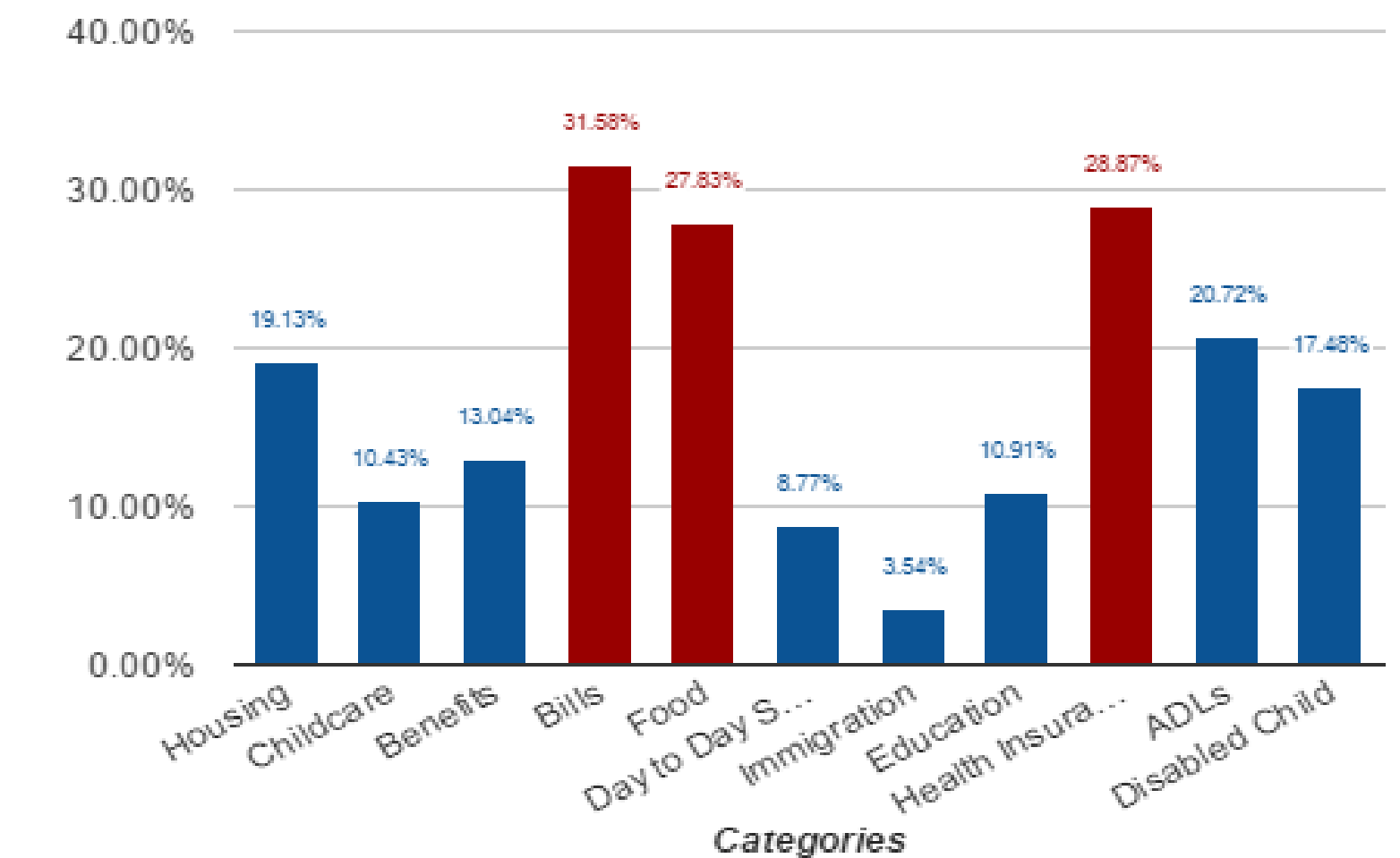


Figure 2. Top needs across all sites were identified and include concerns about bill payment, food insecurity and health insurance.

Of the clients who reported concern about bill insecurity 47% also worried about whether their food would run out.

Future Directions

Findings from survey suggest that trainings should be focused on the following needs: bill insecurity, health insurance access and food insecurity.

Optimization of training could occur by grouping certain needs such as bill and food insecurity while offering stand alone training for general needs such as health insurance.

Goals are to recruit and train lawyers to represent clients and to provide information to the medical community about how to connect patients with Community Legal Aid.



Thank you!

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