



Have you heard about the Seniors Legal and Support Service Health Justice Partnership?

a guide for health care professionals

LEARN ABOUT THE HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP ...

the partners involved, what it can offer, how it can help your patients and your practice in relation to elder abuse, how to refer a patient to the service or seek a secondary consultation.

In 2019, Caxton Community Legal Centre and Metro South Health initiated the first Seniors Legal and Support Service Health Justice Partnership (SLASS HJP), an elder abuse health justice partnership to help prevent, identify and respond to elder abuse, and support older people who are at risk of or experiencing elder abuse. Similar arrangements are now in place with Metro North Health.

It is acknowledged that elder abuse is often first detected when older people seek assistance with health treatment or care. Embedding elder law specialists in the health service through an HJP allows health staff to refer older people directly to the service.

IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT THE HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

- Caxton lawyers and social workers provide free legal and social work support for older persons experiencing elder abuse, mistreatment, neglect or financial exploitation.
- Patients have access to interpreters as well as our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social workers or paralegals.
- The service is available to patients of Metro South Health or Metro North Health who are 60 years of age or over, and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are 50 years and above.
- Even after hospital discharge, SLASS HJP clients can still access elder abuse support.
- All health staff within the hospitals and health services (outpatient's home, community or Queensland Health aged care) can refer patients to SLASS HJP. Health staff can follow up for as long as the older person wants and needs elder abuse assistance.
- The service has well-established connections with other agencies (e.g. Aged and Disability Advocates Australia, Queensland Public Trustee) to ensure integrated service hand-over, particularly when patients have different needs.



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- The SLASS HJP team focuses on the strengths of the older person as well as on supporting their rights and to make their own decisions.

HOW THE HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP CAN HELP HEALTH STAFF AND PATIENTS

Our lawyers provide:

- secondary consultations to health staff who have cases that involve potential elder abuse or other related concerns such as capacity for decision-making. Secondary consultations are always presented by staff in a de-identified manner. They provide a valuable sounding board if staff are unsure of what steps to take or whether to refer a patient. It is as easy as making a phone call and having a conversation.
- direct case consultation with Metro North Health or Metro South Health patients. Our team also provides followed-up support to patients after discharge.

HOW TO SEEK SECONDARY CONSULTATION WITH A LAWYER

- You can call or email any SLASS HJP lawyer Monday to Friday, or contact the lawyer who already services your area.
- For urgent matters, contact any of the lawyers listed below.

HOW TO REFER A PATIENT

A patient can be referred for direct consultation with a SLASS HJP lawyer and/or social worker.

- If you have identified elder abuse, you may wish to call one of our lawyers first to check in on the next steps to take.

- If the patient is in hospital or visiting in out-patients, the lawyer may be on site to visit the older person that day.
- On weekends or if the lawyer is not on site or in your area, a referral can be made by emailing the SLASS HJP referral form.
- If the patient has already been discharged, they may be referred via the SLASS direct referral line on (07) 3187 7187. The patient is welcome to do this themselves if they wish.
- A referral to the SLASS intake officer will be directed to an HJP lawyer, if appropriate. Either way, the patient will be contacted.
- If there is no social worker directly engaged with the patient, health staff can state this on the referral form, and a SLASS HJP social worker can become the first point of contact for the older person.

HOW TO SEEK CONSENT OF THE OLDER PERSON FOR REFERRAL

Health professionals can use the script below when asking the person if they wish to speak with a SLASS HJP lawyer or social worker.

‘You have told me about how worried you are about what is happening at home and want it to stop. I can arrange for someone to come and talk to you about what is happening and what options you might have. Would you like to do this? The service is free and confidential.’

The SLASS HJP is not an investigation service. The team do not take any steps without the patient’s instructions and informed consent.

SLASS HJP lawyers can see the older person once and provide advice and information. The lawyer can then leave them to consider their options, if that is preferred. The SLASS HJP team will be guided by the wishes of the older person.



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EDUCATION

The SLASS team provides free legal information seminars to health care professionals about how to recognise (red flags) and respond to elder abuse, and on topics such as supported decision making, capacity, future planning and enduring documents.

For more information about the HJPs or if you wish to organise a seminar, please contact the SLASS team or the Community Education and Engagement Leader.

CONTACTS FOR THE SENIORS LEGAL AND SUPPORT SERVICE HEALTH JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

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Community Engagement and Education Leader

Caxton Community Legal Centre has provided legal and social support services in Queensland for almost 50 years. It is a non-profit non-government organisation. We receive funding to provide our services to people who are on a low income and would otherwise not be able to access justice. The SLASS HJPs are embedded in the Seniors Legal and Support Service. Funding for the Metro South Health partnership is received from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department whilst funding for the Metro North Health HJP comes from the Queensland Government's SLASS funding.