



**TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF LAW**

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**Cook Children's and Texas A&M School of Law Form Partnership to Provide Free Legal Services to Patient Families in Need**

**Fort Worth, Texas** – As part of an ongoing pursuit to improve the health of every child, Cook Children's Health Care System is joining forces with Texas A&M School of Law (TAMU Law) to create a new medical-legal partnership. The mission of this collaboration is to provide free legal services to patients and families with legal needs that directly affect their health and access to medical care.

Despite a recognized need, the majority of families at Cook Children's are unable to access legal services. Social workers at the medical center are often contacted by patient families who have been unsuccessful in qualifying for public benefits, obtaining a guardianship for their incapacitated adult child or communicating with their landlord to remediate unsafe housing issues. These social, economic and environmental factors have a direct impact on a child's health.

"The health and wellbeing of our patients is impacted by so many factors beyond the scope of traditional medical care," said Vida Amin, M.D., medical director of Cook Children's Neighborhood Clinics. "Having an accessible, dedicated resource for our families to turn to for assistance in navigating their legal challenges will be an invaluable addition to the family-centered care we strive to provide every day."

The medical-legal partnership allows law students the opportunity to develop and apply their skills on behalf of clients who cannot afford legal representation.

"We are giving these children and their families a chance of success by increasing their quality of life by decreasing their unresolved legal needs," said Robert B. Ahdieh, dean of Texas A&M School of Law.

The collaboration, which officially launched in March 2020, has already assisted dozens of patient families. Felicia Carey is one of the program's first clients. She was referred to the TAMU Law after her sister passed away, leaving her to care for three teenagers, including a niece diagnosed with spina bifida.

"At first it was very difficult because I lost the paperwork that allowed me guardianship so I could take the children to the doctor," said Carey. "A social worker at Cook Children's referred me to the program and it's been phenomenal. They made a process, which was unbearable, extremely easy."

Since finalizing her guardianship issues, Carey is now working with TAMU Law on an adult adoption, veterans benefits and developing her will. The program also provides patients and families with access to legal services in family law, housing and public benefits.

“Our job is to prepare compassionate lawyers who will advocate tirelessly for their clients. That’s what sets Texas A&M Law apart from other law schools. We embody our core values, especially selfless service,” said Ahdieh.

### **About Texas A&M School of Law**

[Texas A&M School of Law](#) is an American Bar Association-accredited institution located in downtown Fort Worth. In 2013, Texas A&M acquired Texas Wesleyan University School of Law. Since integrating with Texas A&M seven years ago, the law school has sustained a remarkable upward trajectory by dramatically increasing entering class credentials, improving U.S. News and World Report rankings, hiring 30 new faculty members, adding 10 clinics and six global field study destinations and expanding the depth and breadth of its career services, student services, academic support and admissions functions.

### **About Cook Children’s**

Cook Children’s Health Care System embraces an inspiring Promise – to improve the health of every child in our region through the prevention and treatment of illness, disease and injury. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, we’re proud of our long and rich tradition of serving our community.

Our not-for-profit organization encompasses nine companies – a medical center, two surgery centers, a physician network, home health services and a health plan. It also includes Child Study Center at Cook Children's, Cook Children's Health Services Inc., and Cook Children's Health Foundation. With more than 60 primary, specialty and urgent care locations throughout Texas, families can access our top-ranked specialty programs and network of services to meet their unique needs.

We’ve worked to improve the health of children from across our primary service area of Denton, Hood, Johnson, Parker, Tarrant and Wise counties for more than 100 years. Based on the exceptional care we provide, patients travel to Cook Children’s from around the country and the globe to receive life-saving pediatric care built on leading technology, extraordinary collaboration and the art of caring.

For more information, visit [cookchildrens.org](http://cookchildrens.org).

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