

# INDIANA HEALTH ADVOCACY COALITION NEWSLETTER



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## President's Message

I am incredibly honored to serve in the role as the Indiana Health Advocacy Coalition (IHAC) Board President. Rakuya Trice, IHAC's most immediate past president, served for the past three years and was an incredible spokesperson and role model for IHAC. I have much to learn, but luckily for me, Rakuya is a friend, colleague, and a lifeline in this work. On behalf of all former and present members of the board, thank you for your service, Rakuya.

I invite you to take a look at the 2024 IHAC Board of Directors and you will see some incredible medical and legal professionals who choose to use their powers for the greater good in this work. This is what we at IHAC know and believe about medical-legal partnerships:

Medical-legal partnerships are designed to integrate civil legal aid services with healthcare services to address those complex social conditions that impact the health outcomes of individuals, families, and communities.

### Medical + Legal Intervention = Holistic Support and Action

A prime example of this concept in action is a multidisciplinary free clinic in downtown Indianapolis where graduate students in medicine, law, nursing, physical therapy, occupation therapy and pharmacology work together to address needs on a walk-in basis? Click [here](#) to learn more!

The 2024 IHAC Board has a mission to use its website to spread the good news about the medical-legal partnerships in Indiana. To educate, to inform and to connect, while also taking a deep dive into issues we can address through our medical-legal collaboration.

So, "watch this space," as they say.

## Did you know???

The American Hospital Association (AMA) promotes the use of medical-legal partnerships as a tool to address social determinants/factors of health and improve health equity. If you would like more information on how MLPs work or how you can get involved, take a trip to our website for a video tutorial—[Medical-Legal Partnerships 101](#):

## MATERNAL HEALTH NEWS...

In line with a focus on maternal health and well-being, IHAC highlights [The 2023 March of Dimes Report Card: The State of Maternal and Infant Health for American Families](#). Each year, the March of Dimes rates state performance surrounding the current condition of maternal and infant health, preterm birth and maternal and infant mortality. "Indicators by maternal race/ethnicity are included to call attention to the need for addressing racism in our systems and communities in order to eliminate health disparities. Detailed analyses of these measures inform the development of policies and programs that move us towards improving health for birthing people and the millions of babies born each year in the U.S., D.C. and Puerto Rico. The Report Card presents policies like Medicaid extension and programs like



### OVER 380,000 BABIES WERE BORN PRETERM IN 2022. EVERY DATA POINT REPRESENTS A PERSON WITH A UNIQUE STORY - HERE'S JUST ONE.

At 37 years old, Ashley Taylor got pregnant after her first round of IVF. The pregnancy went smoothly until, at 18 weeks, her water broke. She was put on bed rest in the hospital to help save the pregnancy. Ashley remained there for five weeks of excruciating back pain and uncertainty—until she went into labor. Julia was born at 23 weeks and six days, weighing 1 pound, 2.3 ounces. "I knew that I loved her more than anything from the very beginning when she came into this world and they asked me, 'What do you want to do?' And I said, 'Everything possible.' And now she's an amazing little girl with so much personality."

Far too many families are affected by prematurity. We advocate for policies outlined in this year's 2023 March of Dimes Report Card to prioritize the health of all families—especially moms and babies of color.

Maternal Mortality Review Committees, which can help to achieve equity in maternal and infant health outcomes." March of Dimes Peristats™, [2023 March Of Dimes Report Card For Indiana | PeriStats | March of Dimes](#).

**Closer to home...** The 2023 March of Dimes Report Card issued the state of Indiana a "D" rating or 10.8 to 11.1 percent in Preterm Birth. The preterm birth rate for Indianapolis (Marion County) was rated "F" and Lake County a "D-". See *National Center for Health Statistics, 2022 natality data*. For more information on ratings issued for infant mortality,

## WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THE INDIANA LEGISLATURE?

### Bill tracking in 2024 surrounding safe and fair housing

Several bills focused on Indiana’s growing housing crisis, negligent landlords and foreclosures were optimistically introduced at the start of 2024, may fizzle before making any significant impact. Most of the bills were introduced with an interest in protecting home ownership and the resulting livelihood from predatory practices as well as renters from unsafe living conditions and homelessness. [“TENANT SETBACKS: Failures in legislation at Statehouse lead to calls for a housing commission”](#), Marilyn Odendahl, *The Indiana Citizen*, February 21, 2024.

- [House Bill 1068](#) — addresses predatory practices and requires disclosure on solicitations—PASSED effective July 1, 2024
- [House Bill 1222](#) — protects consumers from certain kinds of real estate services agreements—DID NOT PASS
- [Senate Bill 277](#)— enforcement mechanism for safe and livable rental units—PASSED effective July 1, 2024.

How does a bill become law? For more information, visit [IGA | How a Bill Becomes a Law \(in.gov\)](#).

## Trainings & Conferences in 2024

**SDOH Academy National Webinar Series (Part 4) – Empowering Change: Innovating and Scaling for a Healthier Tomorrow in the Face of Emerging Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)** Thursday, March 14, 2024 from 3-4:30 p.m. [Register Here!](#)

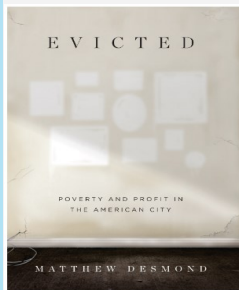
**Learning Collaborative—Medical-Legal Partnerships to Improve Maternal Health Access and Outcomes, April 2024.** The National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership and Renaye James Healthcare Advisors invite health center based medical-legal partnership teams to take part in the upcoming Learning Collaborative: *Medical-Legal Partnerships to Improve Maternal Health Access and Outcomes*. The Learning Collaborative is designed to empower participants with an increased understanding of how the social determinants of health impact maternal health and help them learn how to use MLP to improve maternal health outcomes for health center patients and their communities. [APPLY HERE!](#)

## Suggested Readings...



*“Battling over Birth is a critical and timely resource for understanding black women’s birthing experiences in the United States, a country where black women’s lives—and the lives they create—are at much greater risk of death and injury than those of non-black women ... By distilling the common and diverse threads from over 100 black women, the BWWJ researchers have woven a multi-faceted tapestry that reflects what black women view as important and central to optimal birth experiences. Their recommendations for improving care and outcomes are grounded in black women’s authoritative knowledge. ... This wonderful, important, necessary research by and for black women points in the direction that black women think we should go to ensure they have safe, healthy, and satisfying birth experiences and outcomes. We need to listen and act.”*

—Christine Morton, PhD, author, *Birth Ambassadors: Doulas and the Re-Emergence of Woman-Supported Birth in America*



**Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City** by Matthew Desmond, (Crown Books, 2016)  
*“We spend a lot of time trying to solve the problem of homelessness without addressing its root causes. Desmond’s book looks up close at the precarious situations of several Milwaukee families who spend most of their earnings on rent for substandard housing, who have no protection from eviction, and who, nonetheless, help make their landlords wealthy.”*

—Karrie Jacobs, columnist at Curbed and author of *The Perfect \$100,000 House*

## National Center for Medical Legal Partnership

Click [here](#) for more information about how medical-legal partnerships integrate the unique expertise of lawyers into health care settings to help clinicians, case managers, and social workers address structural problems at the root of so many health inequities.

IHAC has been a primary promoter of the “medical-legal partnership” in Indiana for over a decade. We work to foster relationships between healthcare providers, legal advocates, and academic researchers - with the goal of using legal interventions to improve health outcomes.



Contact Us at [IndianaHAC@gmail.com](mailto:IndianaHAC@gmail.com)