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**Medical-legal partnership for children kicks off endowment campaign**

**JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, June 13, 2018** – Lawyers, doctors and health care institutions working together to better the lives of children in Northeast Florida will kick off a five-year, \$1 million fundraising campaign June 28 at 6 p.m. at the offices of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough in Jacksonville.

All funds raised will be matched at 125 percent by Baptist Health and will be added to a recently established endowment to fund civil legal aid for children with medical issues.

Organized by Jacksonville Area Legal Aid (JALA), the Bridges to Justice for Children’s Health kickoff event will honor Dr. Jerry A. Bridgham, chief medical officer of Wolfson Children’s Hospital.

Wolfson Children’s is part of the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership along with Nemours Children’s Specialty Care, Jacksonville, UF Health Specialty Pediatric Clinics, and Community PedsCare®, a pediatric program of Community Hospice & Palliative Care, as well as JALA, which provides legal counsel for children with medical conditions and their families through the partnership.

While JALA is seeking to raise \$1 million, Baptist Health will match that with an additional \$1.25 million, bringing the endowment total to \$2.25 million and more than doubling the impact.

As a veteran pediatrician, Bridgham believes children’s health care should be focused on the patient and family. For low-income children, that means taking into consideration the family’s financial and legal challenges, which can often adversely impact a child’s health. When a child lacks health insurance, lives in substandard housing, or can’t afford daily necessities, poverty becomes an additional health complication.

“Legal advocacy is often critical to resolving those issues underlying a child’s medical condition,” said Jim Kowalski, JALA president and CEO. “By working together through the Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership, the medical and legal communities can be truly transformative in the lives of our community’s kids.”

Earnings from the endowment will support children’s legal services, including help accessing health insurance and other public benefits, family law advocacy, consumer protection, immigration and ensuring safe and affordable housing.

To register for the event, simply make a donation of any amount at:  
<https://www.jaxlegalaid.org/bridgestojusticedonation/>

For information about sponsorship opportunities, contact Dennis Harrison, JALA chief development officer, at [dennis.harrison@jaxlegalaid.org](mailto:dennis.harrison@jaxlegalaid.org) or (904) 356-8371 ext. 296.

**About Northeast Florida Medical Legal Partnership:**

The NFMLP is part of a nationwide network of projects in which professionals from the medical and legal communities combine resources to produce outcomes for low-income and vulnerable patients (children and adults) that positively impact their health and ability to thrive.

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