

Tenacity & Transformation

Our Campaign for DC Children

Innovative Strategies to Improve Children's Health

For nearly three decades, we've been at the forefront of improving the lives of DC children and families. From our beginning as advocates for individual children to our pivotal role in shaping the laws and systems that impact entire communities, we've consistently used a variety of innovative strategies to expand our reach and deepen our impact.

In 2002, we pioneered one of the nation's first medical-legal partnerships. From the outset, we saw the impact we could have on a child's health when we combined our legal expertise with pediatricians. By integrating lawyers into eight health clinics across the District, we expanded our reach and continued to seek innovative solutions to enhance outcomes for more children.



When our attorneys met children who were repeatedly visiting the ER due to asthma, we collaborated with Children's National to investigate the root cause: unhealthy housing conditions. Over the years, we've successfully addressed housing issues for thousands of children, taking landlords to court to resolve housing issues caused by mold or rodent infestations.

When we saw the same issues happening throughout entire buildings, we fought for city-wide reforms.

Our advocacy has led to significant changes, such as:

- Strengthening DC's housing code by adding mold as a violation;
- Increasing the number of housing inspectors; and
- Creating a new agency to enforce and remedy housing code violations before they caused harm to DC's children and families.

Even with our individual and city-wide advocacy successes, we realized we needed even more tools in our toolbox.

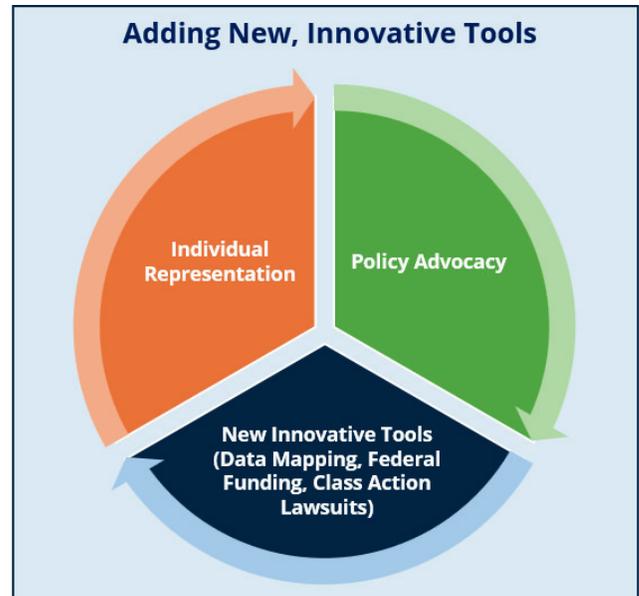
By leveraging the insights gained from the children and families we serve, we continually identify and pursue innovative partnerships and initiatives to achieve our long-term goals, including:

- **First-in-Nation Contract with Medicaid Managed Care Organization:** We recognized that resolving unhealthy housing conditions not only improved children's health but also reduced healthcare costs. By analyzing the costs associated with asthma-related ER visits, we discovered that addressing housing issues led to an average savings of \$10,000 per child in Medicaid costs during the first 18 months after our intervention. This groundbreaking research opened the door for a contract with AmeriHealth Caritas DC – the first of its kind in the nation – through which AmeriHealth reimburses us part of those cost savings, allowing us to support even more families.

- **Data Mapping & Precision Public Health:** We partnered with Children's National Hospital to create a detailed map of DC apartment buildings with the highest rates of pediatric asthma and worst asthma-hazard housing conditions. We are using that map to target our advocacy for the highest impact.

- **Green & Healthy Homes Project:** Through a partnership with the National Housing Trust, we are securing funds to be used to directly remediate housing conditions for hundreds of families. These renovations will improve the health and well-being of the children and families who live in properties with unhealthy housing conditions. By investing in essential building upgrades like energy-efficient appliances, mold remediation, and HVAC improvements, we aim to mitigate asthma and other respiratory health issues.
- **Whole Building Cases:** When landlords are not willing to voluntarily remediate poor housing conditions, we partner with our pro bono partners to file "multi-tenant" lawsuits to secure building-wide repairs that benefit all tenant families.

By using a variety of innovative tools, we are improving the systems that impact a child's family, health and education and building a future where all DC children thrive.



"When a family lives in a multifamily building, we know their neighbors are facing similar housing conditions issues. Our new strategies will allow us to pursue healthier housing for entire buildings - reaching thousands more children and families."

Kathy Zeisel, Director of Special Legal Projects

