

The Improving Social Determinants of Health Act of 2020 (H.R. 6561)

Background

Social and economic conditions such as those in housing, employment, food security, and education have a major influence on individual and community health.¹ These conditions – often referred to as the Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) – are receiving increased attention from insurance companies, hospitals, healthcare systems, and governmental agencies interested in improving health outcomes and controlling costs.² In 2018, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Alex Azar highlighted the necessity of addressing social determinants of health in HHS’s work, including at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).³ For example, the CMS Innovation Center’s Accountable Health Communities (AHC) pilot program funds 31 health systems to identify unmet health-related social needs of their patients and create referral mechanism to address them.⁴ Its goal is “testing whether systematically identifying and addressing the health-related social needs of CMS beneficiaries will impact health care costs and reduce health care utilization.”

However, while clinicians can identify non-medical social needs and make referrals to other organizations, they cannot ensure that there are adequate resources and policies in place to meet the needs of the referred. In addition, many of the social determinants that are being supported by health care systems are short term – temporary housing, nutrition, or transportation – and do not necessarily address the underlying economic and social factors in communities beyond the individual patient.⁵ AHCs and other payer-supported models need support from public health and other sectors to create the communication mechanism, collaborations, programs, and policies to assure that patients’ social needs are met. Public health departments are uniquely situated to build these collaborations across sectors, identify SDOH priorities in communities, and help address policies that inhibit health (see Figure 1).

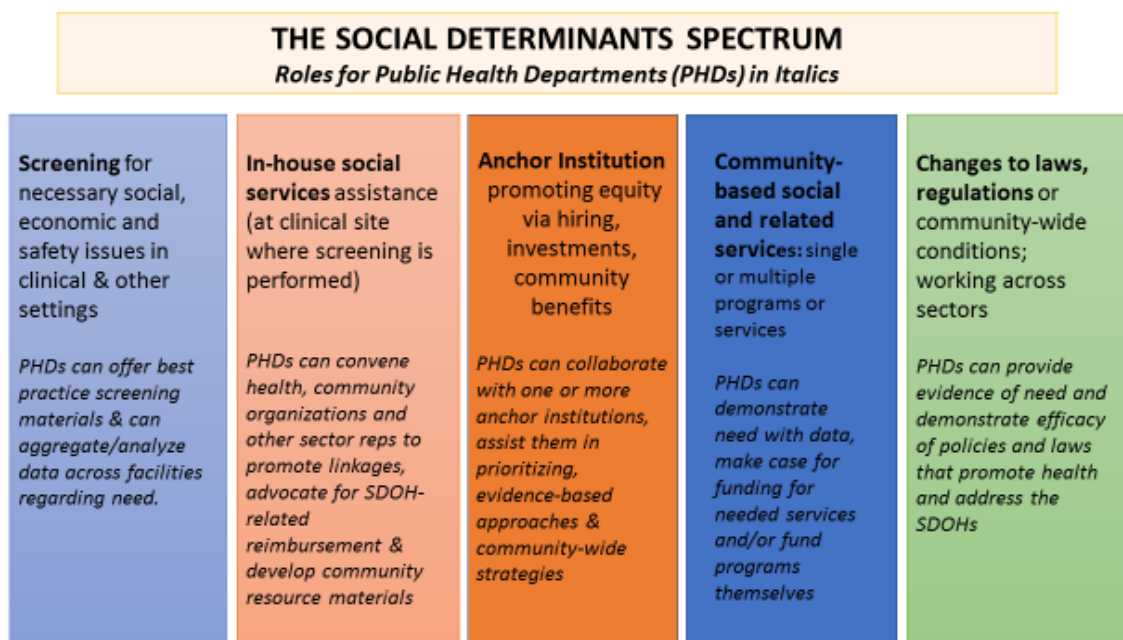


Figure 1. Source: Trust for America’s Health

The Improving Social Determinants of Health Act of 2020 (H.R. 6561) Summary

H.R. 6561 was introduced by Rep. Nanette Diaz Barragán (CA-44) on April 21, 2020.

To see full bill text, click [here](#).

The bill will authorize the CDC to create a program to:

1. Improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities by coordinating CDC SDOH activities.
2. Improve capacity of public health agencies and community organizations to address SDOHs.

The program would:

- Coordinate across CDC to ensure programs consider and incorporate SDOH in grants and activities.
- Award grants to state, local, territorial, and Tribal health agencies and organizations to address SDOHs in target communities.
- Award grants to nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education to conduct research on SDOH best practices; provide technical assistance, training and evaluation assistance to target community grantees; and disseminate best practices.
- Coordinate, support, and align SDOH activities of other agencies, such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and others.
- Collect and analyze data related to SDOH activities.
- Authorize \$50 million annually for program activities.

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Citations:

¹Taylor, L et. al, “Leveraging the Social Determinants of Health: What Works?” Yale Global Health Leadership Institute and the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation of Massachusetts, June 2015

https://bluecrossmafoundation.org/sites/default/files/download/publication/Social_Equity_Report_Final.pdf

² See Social Interventions Research & Evaluation Network (SIREN) at University of California, San Francisco for evidence of effective programs for identifying and addressing social risk in healthcare settings. <https://sirenetwork.ucsf.edu>

³ Azar, AM. The Root of the Problem: America’s Social Determinants of Health. *HHS*. November 14, 2018.

<https://www.hhs.gov/about/leadership/secretary/speeches/2018-speeches/the-root-of-the-problem-americas-social-determinants-of-health.html>

⁴ Accountable Health Communities Model.” CMS. 2019. <https://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/ahcm/>

⁵ Castrucci, B. & Auerbach, J. “Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short of Addressing Social Determinants of Health.” Health Affairs Blog. January 16, 2019. <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hblog20190115.234942/full/>

The Improving Social Determinants of Health Act of 2020 (H.R. 6561) Supporting Organizations

As of April 20, 2020

National Organizations (69):

- 1,000 Days
- The AIDS Institute
- Aligning for Health
- American Association of Birth Centers
- American Association on Health and Disability
- American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
- American College of Preventive Medicine
- American Federation of Teachers
- American Heart Association
- American Kidney Fund
- American Medical Student Association
- American Public Health Association
- Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
- Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
- Association of Minority Health Professions Schools
- Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
- Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO)
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network
- ChangeLab Solutions
- Coalition for Disability Health Equity
- Common Threads
- Community Catalyst
- Community Cup Classic Foundation
- Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
- Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
- Disabled Sports USA
- Epilepsy Alliance America
- Families USA
- Health Leadership Legacy Project
- Health Resources in Action
- Healthy Kinder International
- Hispanic Federation
- Japanese American Citizens League
- Lakeshore Foundation
- Lutheran Services in America
- March of Dimes
- NAACP
- NASTAD
- National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
- National Association of Certified Professional Midwives
- National Association of County and City Health Officials
- National Association of Counties
- National Association of School Nurses
- National Association of Social Workers
- National Center for Transgender Equality
- National Health Care for the Homeless Council
- National Medical Association
- National Network of Public Health Institutes
- National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
- The National REACH Coalition
- National WIC Association
- National Working Positive Coalition
- NERDS RULE INC
- Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility
- NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
- The Participatory Budgeting Project
- PFLAG National
- Population Health Alliance
- The Praxis Project
- Prevention Institute
- Public Health Foundation
- RESULTS
- Society for Public Health Education
- Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
- Treatment Action Group
- Trust for America's Health
- WE in the World
- Well Being Trust
- Wholesome Wave

To add your organization to the list, fill out this [form](#)

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Supporting Organizations

As of April 20, 2020

State and Local Organizations (55):

- Addiction Connections Resource
- Addiction Professionals of North Carolina
- All Youth Access, LLC
- Anders & Associates
- APLA Health
- Autism Family Services of New Jersey
- A Vision of Change Inc.
- Berean Wellness & Community Support Center
- Better Health Partnership
- Bike Cleveland
- Blue Shield of California
- Bridges Into the Future
- Brooklyn Perinatal Network Inc
- California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals
- California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
- Caregivers of New Jersey
- Center for Civil Justice
- Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (WA State)
- Cleveland Public Library
- Commission on the Public's Health System
- Community Based Organization Partners (CBOP) -Brooklyn Chapter
- Community Engagement Studio of Flint
- Community Health Councils
- Cuyahoga County Board of Health
- Epilepsy Information Service of Wake Forest
- Epilepsy Services of NJ
- Equality California
- Equality North Carolina
- The Fairfield Group
- Family Resource Network
- Flint Association of Black Social Workers
- flint rising
- Flint Women's Study Community Action Network
- Florida Institute for Health Innovation
- The Health Trust
- Health by Design
- Healthy Chesapeake
- Illinois Association of Behavioral Health
- Impetus - Let's Get Started LLC
- Jump IN for Healthy Kids
- Latino Coalition for a Healthy CA
- Los Angeles Trust for Children's Health
- MaryCatherine Jones Consulting
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Mid-City CAN (Community Advocacy Network)
- NOELA Community Health Center
- PacificSource
- Physicians for Social Responsibility, AZ Chapter
- Physicians for Social Responsibility-Los Angeles
- Presbyterian Healthcare Services
- Pride Center at Equality Park
- RESULTS DC
- Silver State Equality-Nevada
- United Way of Treasure Valley
- Wall Las Memorias Project
- Washington State Department of Health
- Wayne State University Center for Health and Community Impact
- Western Idaho Community Health Collaborative
- Wisconsin Division of Public Health

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