

The National Alliance to Impact the Social Determinants of Health

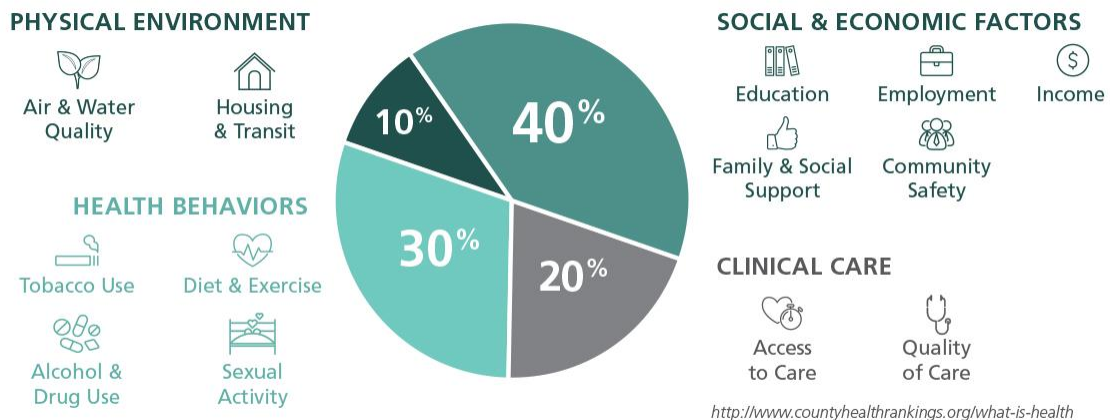
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Supporting State Innovation in Medicaid: Policies for Addressing Social Determinants of Health

The Medicaid program provides important opportunities to address social needs of patients, along with broader social determinants of health, for several reasons:

- Social needs, such as housing, income, and food often impede the delivery of effective medical care to Medicaid beneficiaries, diminishing the value of services provided.
- Many states deliver Medicaid services through managed care contracts for defined populations – providing the opportunity to address patient needs outside the clinic, and capture savings that result from higher-value care.
- Medicaid provides an opportunity to leverage the innovation and experimentation of states.
- Medicaid innovation programs can provide some of the answers we need in addressing broader questions of reducing health costs and improving the health of the population.

These efforts are important to addressing the root causes of poor health, and the consequent high costs of treating preventable diseases:



The National Alliance to Impact the Social Determinants of Health (NASDOH) is encouraged by states engaging in exciting work aimed at addressing the social determinants of health:

- Roughly 41 states incorporate social determinants of health-related activities through managed care contracts or section 1115 demonstration waivers.

- These activities range from employment, education, food, housing, transportation, and violence/abuse support services and other related concepts such as wellness, disparities, community health workers (CHWs), and justice-involved populations.¹
- CMS has indicated a willingness to work with states in these efforts, including the recent approval of the proposal by North Carolina that allows the state to pilot evidence-based interventions that address a broader range of issues that impact an individual's health like housing instability, transportation insecurity, food security, and interpersonal violence and toxic stress.²

Recommendations to accelerate state innovation on social determinants of health:

- Clarify Medicaid guidance. CMS can highlight steps states can take by consolidating approved guidance (such as the State Medicaid Director letter, and postings on the CMS website) and simplifying access for states seeking to develop State Plan Amendments or waivers;
- Support enhanced flexibility. CMS support for enhanced flexibility to build best practices on addressing the social determinants of health, such as encouraging states to establish capitation rates that support SDOH interventions as quality improvement activities, could accelerate the work of states;
- Disseminate approved template language. Develop and provide access to template language for Managed Medicaid Contracts that includes standards for quality measurement and data collection; and
- Facilitate information sharing across states. Establish a CMS led learning collaborative and technical support through the CMMI Innovation Accelerator Program.

Closely monitoring state experience can help us understand broader steps that might require legislative change, and also provide important evidence for private health plans, Medicare Advantage Plans, and policymakers considering systems change across the political spectrum.

The National Alliance to Impact the Social Determinants of Health (NASDOH) is a group of diverse stakeholders working to systematically and pragmatically build a common understanding of the importance of addressing the social determinants of health as part of an overall approach to health improvement. Health and wellbeing are foundational to economic vitality, business competitiveness, personal achievement, and prosperity, and an increased level of health for all Americans. We define the social determinants of health in keeping with the Healthy People 2020 definition of “conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks”.

¹ Crumley, D., Lloyd, J., Pucciarello, M., Stapelfeld, B. (December 2018). *Addressing Social Determinants of Health via Medicaid Managed Care Contracts and Section 1115 Demonstrations*. Center for Health Care Strategies (CHCS)

² Seema Verma. (October 24, 2018). *CMS Approves North Carolina's Innovative Medicaid Demonstration To Help Improve Health Outcomes*. Health Affairs Blog.