The Issue

Many factors combine to affect the health of individuals and communities. Despite annual health care expenditures projected to exceed $3 trillion, health outcomes in the U.S. continue to fall behind other developed countries. Compared to other Western countries, the U.S. disproportionately spends less on social services and more on health care. Though health care is essential to health, research demonstrates that it is a relatively weak health determinant. Health behaviors, such as smoking and diet and exercise, are the most important determinants of premature death. Moreover, there is growing recognition that a broad range of social, economic, and environmental factors shape individuals’ opportunities and barriers to engage in healthy behaviors.  

Source: The Kaiser Family Foundation, 2015

Social Determinants of Health Model

Social Determinants of Health have a significant impact on health outcomes. Social determinants of health must be addressed in order to achieve large and sustained improvements in health outcomes. This involves the medical care and public health systems, but extends beyond these partners and requires collaboration with multiple sectors outside of traditional health, including education, housing, labor, justice, transportation, agriculture, and environment.

What Determines Health?

- Genetics: 20%
- Health Care: 20%
- Social, Environmental, Behavioral Factors: 60%

Source: McGinnis et al, 2002
What are Social Determinants of Health?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Healthy People 2020 breaks down social determinants of health into the following five categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Stability</th>
<th>Education</th>
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<td>Poverty</td>
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<td>Employment</td>
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<td>Food Security</td>
<td>Language and Literacy</td>
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<td>Housing Security</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education and Development</td>
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<th>Health and Health Care</th>
<th>Neighborhood and Built Environment</th>
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<td>Access to Primary Care</td>
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<th>Social &amp; Community Context</th>
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<td>Social Cohesion</td>
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<td>Civic Participation</td>
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Health in All Policies

Health in All Policies is an emerging strategy to address social determinants of health to improve population health and seeks to ensure that decision-makers across different sectors are informed about the health, equity, and sustainability consequences of policy decisions in non-health sectors. Health in All Policies is a collaborative approach to improve health by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas. A Health in All Policies approach identifies the ways in which decisions in multiple sectors affect health and how better health can support the goals of these multiple sectors. It engages diverse partners and stakeholders to work together to promote health, equity, and sustainability, and simultaneously advance other goals such as promoting job creation and economic stability, transportation access and mobility, a strong agricultural system, and improved educational attainment.


For more information visit: [http://www.cdc.gov/policy/hiap/](http://www.cdc.gov/policy/hiap/)
Social Determinants of Health and Zip Codes

Across America, babies born just a few miles apart have dramatic differences in life expectancy. Some will die 20 years earlier than others who live just a short distance away because of differences in social determinants of health, such as education, income, race, ethnicity, and where they live. To improve health, we need to improve people’s opportunities to make healthy choices—in the places where they live, learn, work, and play. Below are examples of life expectancy differences of individuals who live a short distance from one another.

New Orleans, L.A.

The average life expectancy for babies born to mothers in New Orleans can vary by as much as **25 years** across neighborhoods just a few miles apart.

Kansas City, M.O.

The average life expectancy for babies born to mothers in Kansas City can vary by as much as **14 years** across neighborhoods just a few miles apart.
Research Showing the Effects of Social Determinants of Health

Diabetes and Income

Figure 2. Rate of hospitalizations for patients with diabetes per 100,000 persons by income quartile, 2008*

*Diagnoses for diabetes were either a principal diagnosis or a contributing diagnosis for hospitalization.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Diabetes and Race/Ethnicity

Age-adjusted percentage of people aged 20 years or older with diagnosed diabetes, by race/ethnicity, United States, 2010–2012

- Non-Hispanic whites: 7.6%
- Asian Americans: 9.0%
- Hispanics: 12.8%
- Non-Hispanic blacks: 13.2%
- American Indians/Alaska Natives: 15.9%

*Based on the 2000 U.S. standard population.


Diabetes and Education

Figure 2. The prevalence of diabetes is increasing, especially among people with less educational attainment


Tobacco Use and Income

Statistics from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey showing the percentage of adults who smoke by poverty level:
- 26.9% of adults below the poverty level
- 18.3% of adults at or above the poverty level

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Tobacco Use and Race/Ethnicity

Statistics from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey showing the percentage of adults who smoke by racial/ethnic group:
- 31.4% of American Indians/Alaska Native adults (non-Hispanic)
- 25.9% of multiple race adults (non-Hispanic)
- 21.0% of White adults (non-Hispanic)
- 20.6% of Black adults (non-Hispanic)
- 12.5% of Hispanic adults
- 9.2% of Asian adults (non-Hispanic)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Tobacco Use and Education

Statistics from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey showing the percentage of adults who smoke by education level:
- 6.3% of adults with a postgraduate degree
- 9.9% of adults with an undergraduate degree
- 16.9% of adults with an associate’s degree
- 22.2% of adults with a college experience
- 22.8% of adults with a high school diploma
- 35.2% of adults with a GED certificate
- 45.5% of adults who have not completed high school

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention