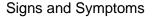# Priority Areas – Social Determinants of Health

What is it? The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) refer to the conditions where people live, learn, work, play, and age that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. In other words, health starts in our homes, schools and communities (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation).

The five key areas of SDOH are:

- Economic stability
- Education
- Health and health care
- Neighborhood and built environment
- Social and community context

Signs and Symptoms

5 keys of SDOH (HealthyPeople2030)

According to the CDC, long-standing systemic social and health inequities have increased risk among racial and ethnic minority groups for getting sick and dying. This is due to economic and social differences that limit access to health care resources.

Prevention and Management

In our society, not all benefit equally. That is, equality is not the same as equity; public health needs to focus on justice to shape health. Social determinants are rooted in social environments that stress families. That is, low income families live in under-resourced neighborhoods where they encounter food deserts, no place to play, bad air and water quality. These upstream factors limit choices and impact chronic diseases downstream.

The result is often adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which include physical or emotional abuse, neglect, and family dysfunction. These may result in mental illness, substance use, breakup, prison, violence, and low education. The more ACEs children experience the more health impacts they experience, requiring psychosocial support needed to cope with stress.

To expand further, consider how upstream factors in each of the five key areas point to conditions downstream:

Economic Stability
- Employment
- Income
- Expenses/debt
- Medical Bills
- Food security
- Housing stability

Education

- Early childhood education and development
- High school/vocational training
- Higher education
- Language
- Literacy

Health and health care
- Access to health care

- Access to primary care
- Health literacy

Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Quality of housing
- Transportation
- Safety/crime and violence
- Parks/playgrounds
- Walkability

- Environmental conditions

Social and Community Context
- Social cohesion/integration
- Community engagement
- Support systems
- Incarceration
- Discrimination

Resources

- CDC
  - https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm
- Healthy People 2030
  - https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health