# Social Determinants: Expanding Access to Resources to Maximize Wellness and Self-Sufficiency in a Pandemic Afflicted Community

Social Determinants of Health

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Access and

Healthy People 2030

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# Background:

- Social determinants of health represent the social and physical environmental factors that influence our health including community construction, transportation, housing, and food insecurity and more.
- Research has demonstrated that our home, school, work, and neighborhood environments either support, or challenge, the extent to which we experience health issues, are able to address these concerns, and how we move forward with preventive efforts.
- Healthy People 2020 identified social determinants of health as a topic area for future interventions and noted "all Americans deserve an equal opportunity to make the choices that lead to good health."
- However, to fulfill that goal, we must address disparities in the social and physical environments. Not all environments are created equal.
- Social determinants become even more pronounced during periods of stress such as with a pandemic. During the COVID-19, those
  who were without resources became considerably more vulnerable with isolation and service restrictions.

# Objectives:

- Review national literature for studies examining social determinant changes during onset of COVID-19;
- Identify proposed areas where services are needed and compare proposed approaches; and
- Identify proposed next steps in research to fully understand COVID impact for disability groups as COVID continues

### Methods:

- Reviewed national literature based on following criteria:
- Peer-reviewed manuscript
- Conducted within the United States
- Original research, randomized control trials, case studies, survey research
- Keywords: Social determinants, disability, COVID-19, services, and research
- Published between March October 2020

- Targeted Outcomes included:
- Observe how social determinant factors have changed at onset of COVID
- Identify proposed areas where service gaps were identified
- Proposed approaches for overcoming barriers
- Future research recommendations

# Results:

- 2321 manuscripts resulted in initial keyword search
- 573 manuscripts met all eligibility criteria

#### Associations between COVID-19 and Social Determinants

- Positive correlation of COVID-19 cases by age and disabilities
- COVID-19 contributed to a significantly farther divide based on socioeconomic status
- Limited COVID-19 testing and follow up
- Limited medical care and access to facilities for individuals using wheelchairs
- Food consumption disparities associated with increased violence and abuse in some populations
- Social isolation associated with COVID-19 guidelines related to higher risks of negative health conditions, cognitive decline, and premature mortality as well as increased risk of abuse and financial scams.

#### Service Gaps due to COVID-19

- Assessing social determinant changes during COVID-19 became more difficult for providers
- End-of-Life care determinations questioned within select populations
- Medical rationing and procedural disparities were reported in many areas
- Limited training options in select fields for health science students and providers

#### Proposed Solutions to Addressing Social Determinant Needs

- New technologies sought after and tested to prevent social seclusion
- New methods to collect data that improve prevention and treatment
- Assuring disability-accessible COVID-19 information and accurate reporting of disability status
- Regular assessment of patient social needs with workforce who can address them
- o Increased availability of short form assessments (PRAPARE, AAFP Tool, HRSN Tool)
- Using SHH framework to identify most vulnerable

#### Future Research Recommendations

- Continued studies designed to assess social determinants among individuals with disabilities
- Share work with state officials and families dissemination plans that include those audiences would be a MUST

# Conclusions:

- We need to collectively prepare as a nation for future emergency responses to ensure we identify vulnerable populations and have a structure for addressing disparities
- Research examining social determinants and barriers is needed particularly among the disability populations
- Information gathered from this work must be shared with service providers to establish the gaps and start discussions for how to address them in practice and policy.

## Highlighted References:

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