

An Introduction to the Social Determinants of Health

Approaches to address health issues often focus on health care solutions. While health care is certainly important, research shows that health outcomes are driven by a number of things, including economic, social, and environmental factors. These factors, known as the social determinants of health (SDoH), greatly impact health outcomes, and health disparities are often rooted in racial and socioeconomic inequities.

Defining social determinants of health

“The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age... These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power, and resources at global, national, and local levels... Social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequities – the unfair and avoidable differences in health status seen within and between countries.”

[Taking Action on the Social Determinants of Health](#) | WHO

Other definitions:

[Resilient Wisconsin: Social Determinants of Health](#) | WI DHS

[About Social Determinants of Health](#) | CDC

For more information:



[Social Determinants of Health](#)

- Information about how Healthy People 2020 approached SDoH



[Social Determinants of Health](#)

- Includes a model showing how upstream and downstream factors impact health



[A New Way to Talk about the Social Determinants of Health](#)

- A guide to SDoH language

Wisconsin-specific resources:



[Overarching Health Priority: Social Determinants of Health](#)

- Fond Du Lac County example of addressing health inequities



[Social Determinants and Health Equity](#)

- Lincoln County SDoH goals and data



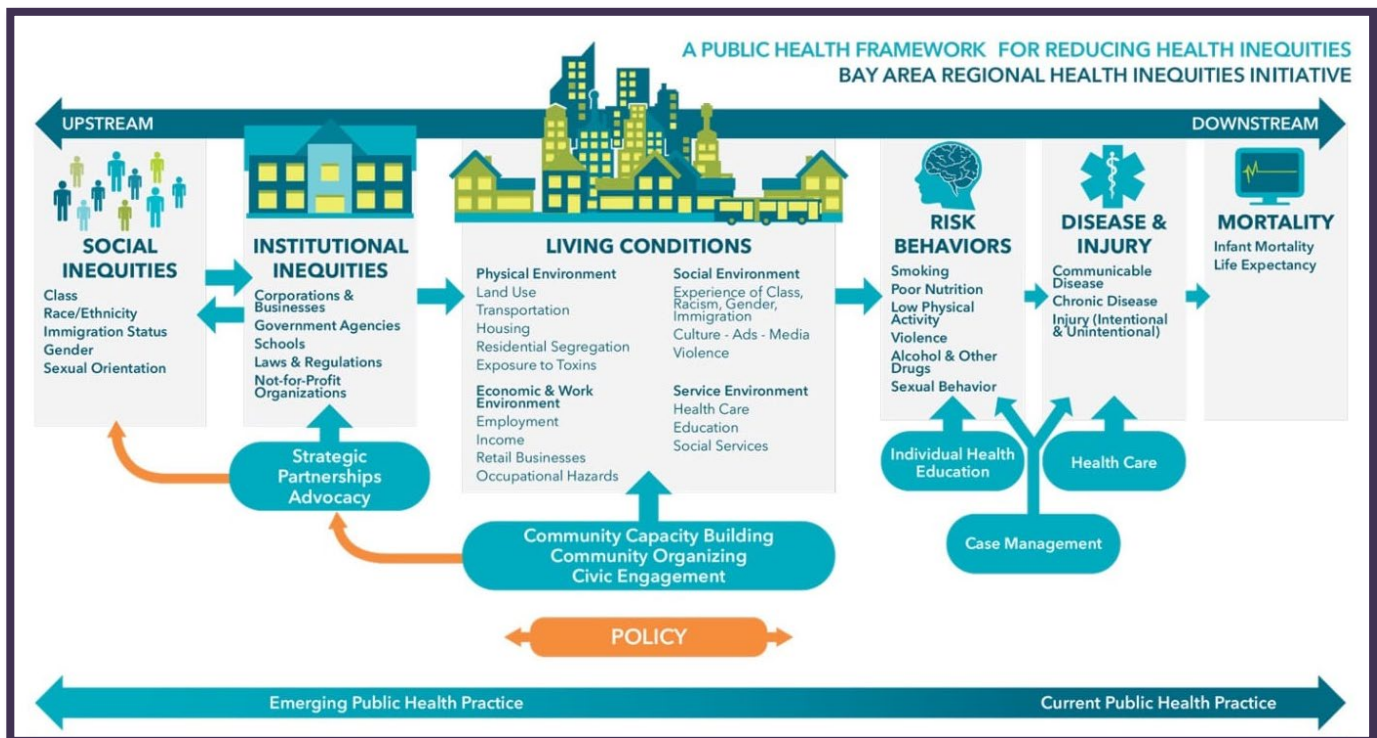
[Social Determinants of Health: Key Concepts](#)

- 18-minute video from the Sixteenth Street Health Equity Summit

How SDoH relates to health equity

Given the impact that economic, social, and environmental factors have on health outcomes, addressing SDoH is central to improving overall health, reducing disparities, and promoting health equity.

- Social determinants drive health equity and inequities.
- Addressing the social determinants improves people’s overall well-being.
- Improving overall well-being helps promote good health and prevent reoccurring health problems.
- Addressing the social determinants of health is a prevention strategy that focuses on the root of the problem.



[BARHII Framework](#)



Initiatives and ideas to address SDoH and disparities

[Resources for States to Address Health Equity and Disparities](#)

- Equity resources and tools from the National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP)

[Social Determinants of Health](#)

- Examples of addressing SDoH from the Monterey County (CA) Health Department

[Beyond Health Care: The Role of Social Determinants in Promoting Health and Health Equity](#)

- Examples of initiatives addressing SDoH from the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF)