Investing in a Healthier America: The Role of Social Determinants

Lauren A. Taylor, MDiv, MPH
@LaurenTaylorMPH, ltaylor@hbs.edu
Social Determinants of Health Alliance for Health Reform
December 12, 2016
Total Expenditures as a %GDP

*Switzerland and Turkey are missing data for 2009
METHOD: Multivariable regression using OECD pooled data from 1995-2007 on 29 countries and 5 health outcomes.

FINDING: The ratio of social to health spending was significantly associated with better health outcomes: less infant, mortality, less premature death, longer life, expectancy and fewer low birth weight babies.

NOTE: This remained true even when the US was excluded from the analysis.
Ratio of social-to-health care spending*

*Medicare and Medicaid spending

LOWEST QUINTILE
MEDIAN QUINTILE
HIGHEST QUINTILE

Investing in a Healthier America: The Role of Social Determinants
METHOD: Multivariable regression using state-level repeated measures data from 2000-2009 with regional and time fixed effects.

FINDING: The lagged ratio of social to health spending was significantly associated with better health outcomes: adults who were obese; had asthma; reported fourteen or more mentally unhealthy days or fourteen or more days of activity limitations in the past thirty days; and had lower mortality rates for lung cancer, acute myocardial infarction, and type 2 diabetes.
Which social services produce better health and save dollars?

- housing for chronically homeless individuals
- integrated housing and health care for homeless families
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- home-delivered meals for older Americans
- case management with home visitation by nurse practitioners for low-income individuals and low-income, first-time moms

Highlights the wrong pocket problem.
Evidence Exists for Various Integration Models

Traditional Health Care Sector

Community Benefit Grants

Programmatic Partnership

Offering Individual Social Services

Strategic Investments

Pooled Health and Social Services Budgets
PORTLAND, Ore. — Five major hospitals in Portland, Oregon, and a nonprofit health care plan said Friday they will donate a combined $21.5 million toward the construction of nearly 400 housing units for the city's burgeoning homeless and low-income population — a move hailed by national housing advocates as the largest private investment of its kind in the nation.

The money from the private health care providers will be part of a larger $69 million capital construction plan that comes as the booming Pacific Northwest city struggles with a seemingly intractable homeless problem that has become more visible in the past few years and poses a political quagmire for local leaders.

Earlier this month, hundreds of people were evicted from an informal tent camp on a nature trail on the city's east side, and the city has fielded thousands of complaints on a hotline for residents as leaders debate...
Health + Social Contracting Challenges

- How to provide social services – make in-house or buy from community?
- How to vet potential partner organizations?
- How to share information with partner organizations?
- How to ensure SDOH strategy doesn’t undercut other revenue streams?