

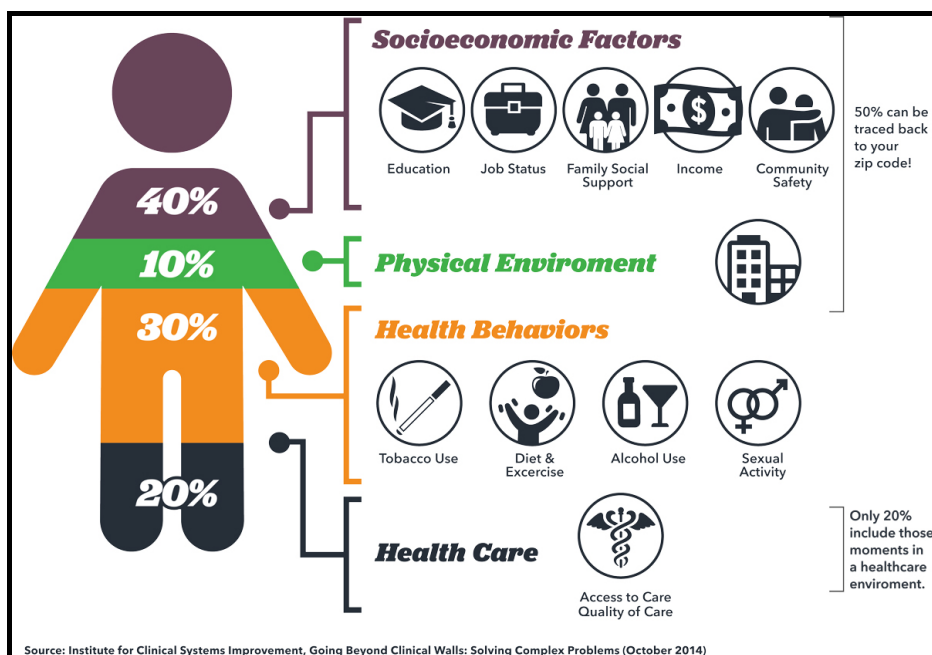


Ascension

Social Determinants of Health Screening Fact Sheet

What are Social Determinants of Health?

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) defines social determinants of health (SDoH) as the conditions under which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. SDoH factors include socioeconomic status; racism and discrimination; poverty and income inequality; and the lack of community resources, among others. Screening for SDoH can help identify specific needs of an individual.



SDoH can be interrelated as well, so a positive screen could indicate the need for an in-depth conversation about needs and challenges outside of a specific social need.

Experiencing multiple social determinants will increase stress and further impact the health of patients.

Why is it important to our patients?

Screening for social determinants of health is important because many patients don't know how to bring up or discuss non-medical needs with their provider. The screening can provide a prompt or help patients feel safe to discuss these topics that account for as much as 55% of health outcomes. SDoHs can affect all aspects of a patient's life (physical, psychological, emotional, social, and economic) and connecting patients with resources can lessen the impact in these aspects of their life.

Why is it important to Ascension?

SDoH account for as much as 55% of health outcomes. As Ascension, our mission is to commit ourselves to serving all persons with special attention to those who are poor and vulnerable and dedicate ourselves to caring for the whole person which will sustain and improve the health of the individuals and communities. As we pursue our vision of a strong, vibrant Catholic health ministry in the United States which will lead to the transformation of healthcare, addressing social determinants of health will help Ascension ensure service that is committed to the health and well-being for our communities and that responds to the needs of individuals throughout the life cycle.

Things to consider when delivering the screening

- **Be prepared** - Have a plan for how you will deliver the screening and respond to specific answers
- **Listen with Care** - Listen without interrupting or making clarifying statements, maintain eye contact, avoid trying to solve for the problem at that time
- **Be empathetic** - Acknowledge emotions by practicing empathy
- **Stay calm** - Practice self regulation. If the patient feels you are uneasy or uncomfortable they may feel that way also
- **Avoid certain phrases** - Avoid saying things like “I know how you feel”; “I feel your pain”; or everything is going to be fine.”
- **Acknowledge and provide next steps** - Let the patient know that you heard them, that their responses are important and what next steps will be

How to respond to a positive response (Talking Points)

When responding to positive responses on the screening, use phrases such as:

- “Thank you for sharing that, I know that may have been hard. We will work on providing you with the resources you need.”

Resources

It is important to have a plan for moving to action when needs are identified. Connecting patients with resources to assist with needs will benefit the patient and community.

- **Neighborhood Resource website** - <https://healthcare.ascension.org/neighborhood-resource> - The Neighborhood Resource site will help you find resources in your community quickly and easily.
- **211 Helpline Center** - The 211-dialing code provides callers with information about and referral to available social services in their location. It is currently available in portions of all 50 states and Puerto Rico.
- **Community Tool Box** - Community Tool Box (www.ctb.ku.edu/en) is a free, online resource with tools for learning and assessing community needs and resources, addressing social determinants of health, engaging stakeholders, action planning, building leadership, improving cultural competency, planning an evaluation, and sustaining efforts over time.