

APPENDIX A – Social Determinants of Health

(This list is not meant to be all-inclusive of possible conditions to address, you may suggest one not listed here.)

- **Social connections and support:** Creating communities that are welcoming to all people, with strong social connections and support, can encourage healthy behaviors by connecting people with resources and upholding positive social norms. Supportive environments help protect against trauma and stress. A strong social network also helps people stay active and engaged while managing their health concerns.
- **Racism and discrimination:** Early life circumstances, such as adverse childhood experiences, can contribute to developing health concerns later in life. The experience of racism or other ongoing discrimination creates epigenetic changes (changes in people's genes) that pass to the next generation and increase risk for health concerns. Racism and discrimination can also worsen people's health and keep them from accessing screenings, preventive care, and treatment.
- **Housing:** Safe, stable, and affordable housing reduces stress and makes it easier to establish and routinely access health care, including screenings to detect risk factors for health concerns. For those with health concerns, stable housing also makes it easier to keep up with treatment and monitoring.
- **Neighborhood conditions:** A safe and healthy neighborhood supports healthy behaviors that help prevent and manage health concerns. For example, green spaces that are safe and accessible encourage people to engage in physical activity. Access to grocery stores selling fresh produce makes it easier for people to eat healthful foods.
- **Educational opportunity:** Educational opportunities, including extracurricular activities and post-high school education, improve health overall and reduce the incidence of health concerns. For example, in 2015, about 5.4 percent of adults with a college degree reported having diabetes, compared with 8.5 percent of adults without a college degree.
- **Employment and benefits:** Meaningful work and adequate wages provide social connection and financial security, both of which reduce the stress that can contribute to health concerns (stress stimulates the release of various hormones, which can result in elevated blood glucose levels). Employment is also often the primary provider of access to health care for people.
- **Income and wealth:** Health survey data often shows that health concerns are higher for people living in households with lower incomes. Low income contributes to stress, which is a risk factor for many health complications; low income also increases food insecurity, making it more difficult to manage a healthy lifestyle through nutrition.

- **Access to quality health care:** People with health concerns benefit from access to high quality, affordable and culturally/linguistically competent care, including treatment and education about how to manage their condition.
- **Transportation:** People need affordable, convenient transportation options to access healthcare screenings, preventive care, and treatment.

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