

Social Determinants of Health For Real Estate

Applying SDOH Principles to Real Estate Practice

Social determinants of health (SDOH) are the conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age that have a major impact on health, well-being and quality of life (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020). SDOH are referenced frequently throughout public health and equity research. Because clinical care accounts for a relatively small portion of health outcomes - about 20% according to studies conducted in the United States - practitioners who have the ability to influence the remaining determinants of health should be aware of what they are and how to promote them actively throughout their work (Magnan, 2017).

SDOH typically are grouped into five categories: economic stability, education access and quality, health care access and quality, social and community context and neighborhood and built environment. While addressing each of these categories is important to promote human health and well-being holistically, real estate practitioners have the most influence over the neighborhood and built environment and social and community context categories.

Economic Stability	Economic growth, job opportunities, wealth accumulation, secure employment, employment benefits, and meaningful work.
Education Access and Quality	Educational opportunities for everyone, access to quality public education and health, digital and financial literacy.
Health Care Access and Quality	Access to quality health care services for preventative care and for treatment of chronic illnesses.
Social and Community Context	Public and personal safety, strong community relationships, equitable opportunities for community building and connection.
Neighborhood and Built Environment	Quality and affordable housing and transportation, healthy and safe homes, recreation spaces and workplaces, internet connectivity, access to healthy foods and safe parks and green spaces.

Resources for Social Determinants of Health in Real Estate:

Several resources are available to help real estate practitioners better understand the social determinants of health and how to apply them throughout their work:

- **Centering Health Equity Conceptual Framework:** Influenced by the social determinants of health, the Centering Health Equity conceptual framework aims to highlight how projects in multi-sector real estate, infrastructure, design and planning fields mediate access to fundamental life-giving resources (like shelter, water, movement, air and food) for people who interface with the assets that they develop. The framework maps the influence, power and privilege held by different groups of decision-makers across the industry and highlights how projects may promote customer or user health, as well as broader community health equity.
- **BARHII Framework:** Bay Area Regional Health Inequities Initiative (BARHII) created a conceptual framework to illustrate the connection between social inequalities and health. The framework focuses the bulk of its attention on upstream efforts to promote health, well-being and equity, including institutional inequities like corporations and businesses and our physical, social and work environments.
- **RWJF Culture of Health:** The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Culture of Health framework is intended to help provide the nation with a fair and just opportunity for health, well-being and equity. Informed by rigorous research on the social determinants of health and other factors which affect health, it recognizes that many ways exist to build a Culture of Health through individual, community and organizational efforts. The built environment and social and economic environment, both heavily influenced by the real estate industry, are core tenets of this framework.
- **Healthy People Campaign:** The Healthy People Campaign is an initiative from the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) that provides 10-year national objectives for improving the health of all Americans. These objectives are rooted in the social determinants of health and include achieving health equity, eliminating disparities and improving the health of all groups. The real estate sector may play a part in the Healthy People Campaign by helping to create social and physical environments that promote good health for all.

With a more holistic understanding of the factors that influence health, well-being and equity, real estate practitioners may create projects and portfolios that have lasting, positive effects on the communities and people who will interact with the spaces on a daily basis.

References:

Magnan S. Social determinants of health 101 for health care: five plus five. National Academy of Medicine. October 2017. Available from: <https://nam.edu/social-determinants-of-health-101-for-health-care-five-plus-five/>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2030: Social determinants of health. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. 2020. Available from: <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>