

Congressional Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Caucus

About the Caucus

The Congressional Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Caucus will explore opportunities to improve the impact of services delivered to address social determinants with the support of federal funding. It will work to amplify evidence-based approaches to holistic well-being.

Congressional responsibility for programs to address social determinants is divided among many committees and delivered across multiple agencies. As such, we have convened the Congressional Social Determinants of Health Caucus to bring together members of Congress from disparate jurisdictions to highlight the opportunities for coordination to improve health outcomes and maximize existing and future federal investments in health, food, housing, transportation, and other important drivers of health. Leadership is needed to break down the barriers that impede better coordination between health and social services programs.

Specifically, the Congressional SDOH Caucus will:

- Shine a spotlight on how the COVID-19 PHE has had a disparate impact on certain populations and communities, including people with social needs;
- Convene bipartisan thought leaders to educate members on the evidence around social determinants, why it is necessary to explore, and what's currently working;
- Collect input and feedback from community-based organizations, health, public health, and social service organizations, and state and local government leaders on how best to facilitate effective social determinant interventions, and how Congress can take action to advance this work;
- Discuss bipartisan legislative efforts to address social determinant challenges across multiple committees of jurisdiction; and
- Highlight priorities on behalf of interested members of Congress to external stakeholders and the Executive branch.

Congressional SDOH Caucus Members

- Cheri Bustos (D-IL), *Co-chair*
- Tom Cole (R-OK), *Co-chair*
- G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), *Co-chair*
- Markwayne Mullin (R-OK), *Co-chair*
- Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
- Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE)
- Carolyn Bourdeaux (D-GA)
- Salud Carbajal (D-CA)
- Tony Cardenas (D-CA)
- Yvette Clarke (D-NY)
- Emanuel Cleaver (D-MO)
- Steve Cohen (D-TN)
- Brian Higgins (D-NY)
- Chrissy Houlahan (D-PA)
- John Larson (D-CT)
- Barbara Lee (D-CA)
- Carolyn Maloney (D-NY)
- Joseph Morelle (D-NY)

- Mary Gay Scanlon (D-PA)
- Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)
- Terri Sewell (D-AL)
- Albio Sires (D-NJ)
- Darren Soto (D-FL)
- Marilyn Strickland (D-WA)
- Thomas Suozzi (D-NY)
- Ritchie Torres (D-NY)
- Marc Veasey (D-TX)

Call for Comments! Caucus Request for Information

The Congressional Social Determinants of Health Caucus is seeking feedback on challenges and opportunities related to social determinants of health. Please share feedback to the questions included in [this form](#) on challenges and opportunities, which will be shared with SDOH Caucus co-chairs.

Submissions are due by September 21, 2021.

Social Determinants of Health Caucus – [Request for Information](#)

Economic and social conditions – like stable housing, reliable transportation, and access to healthy foods – have a powerful impact on our health and wellness. Known as social determinants of health (SDOH), a focus on these non-medical factors has the potential to improve health and well-being and to increase the government’s return on investment in both health and social services programs.

Congressional responsibility for programs to address SDOH is divided among many Committees, while programs addressing health and social needs are splintered across multiple federal agencies. As such, we have convened the bipartisan Congressional Social Determinants of Health Caucus to bring together members of Congress from disparate jurisdictions to highlight the opportunities for coordination across programs, to improve health outcomes, and to maximize existing and future federal investments in health, food, housing, transportation, and other important drivers of health. Leadership is needed to break down the barriers that impede better coordination between health and social services programs.

Please share feedback to the following questions on challenges and opportunities, which will be shared with SDOH Caucus co chairs. For more information, please contact Liam Steadman in Congresswoman Cheri Bustos’ office at Liam.Steadman@mail.house.gov, Caitlin Van Sant in Congressman G.K. Butterfield's office at Caitlin.VanSant@mail.house.gov, Shane Hand in Congressman Tom Cole’s office at Shane.Hand@mail.house.gov, or Kaitlynn Skoog in Congressman Markwayne Mullin’s office at Kaitlynn.Skoog@mail.house.gov.

RFI Questions:

Experience with SDOH Challenges

- What specific SDOH challenges have you seen to have the most impact on health? What areas have changed most during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- What types of gaps in care, programs, and services serve as a main barrier in addressing SDOH in the communities you serve? What approaches have your organization, community, Tribal organization, or state taken to address such challenges?
- Are there other federal policies that present challenges to addressing SDOH?
- Is there a unique role technology can play to alleviate specific challenges (e.g. referrals to community resources, telehealth consultations with community resource partners, etc.)? What are the barriers to using technology in this way?

Improving Alignment

- Where do you see opportunities for better coordination and alignment between community organizations, public health entities, and health organizations? What role can Congress play in facilitating such coordination so that effective social determinant interventions can be developed?
- What potential do you see in pooling funding from different sources to achieve aligned goals in addressing SDOH? How could Congress and federal agencies provide state and communities with more guidance regarding how they can blend or braid funds?
- How could federal programs such as Medicaid, CHIP, SNAP, WIC, etc. better align to effectively address SDOH in a holistic way? Are there particular programmatic changes you recommend?
- Are there any non-traditional partners that are critical to addressing SDOH that should be better aligned with the health sector to address SDOH across the continuum from birth through adulthood? What differences should be considered between non-health partners for adults' social needs vs children's social needs?
- What opportunities exist to better collect, understand, leverage, and report SDOH data to link individuals to services to address their health and social needs and to empower communities to improve outcomes?
- What are the key challenges related to the exchange of SDOH data between health care and public health organizations and social service organizations? How do these challenges vary across social needs (i.e., housing, food, etc.)? What tools, resources, or policies might assist in addressing such challenges?

Best Practices and Opportunities

- What are some programs/emergency flexibilities your organization leveraged to better address SDOH during the pandemic (i.e., emergency funding, emergency waivers, etc.)? Of the changes made, which would you like to see continued post-COVID?
- Which innovative state, local, and/or private sector programs or practices addressing SDOH should Congress look into further that could potentially be leveraged more widely across other settings? Are there particular models or pilots that seek to address SDOH that could be successful in other areas, particularly rural, tribal or underserved communities?
- Given the evidence base about the importance of the early years in influencing lifelong health trajectories, what are the most promising opportunities for addressing SDOH and promoting equity for children and families? What could Congress do to accelerate progress in addressing SDOH for the pediatric population?

Transformative Actions

- Alternative payment models help to measure health care based on its outcomes, rather than its services. What opportunities exist to expand SDOH interventions in outcome-based alternative payment models and bundled payment models?

- A critical element of transformation, particularly for new models of care, is measurement and evaluation. With SDOH in mind, which are the most critical elements to measure in a model, and what differences should be considered when measuring SDOH outcomes for adults vs children?
- How can Congress best address the factors related to SDOH that influence overall health outcomes in rural, tribal and/or underserved areas to improve health outcomes in these communities?
- What are the main barriers to programs addressing SDOH and promoting in the communities you serve? What should Congress consider when developing legislative solutions to address these challenges?

Open Forum

- Is there any other information you would like to share?