



**Social Determinants
of Health Strategy**
Michigan's Roadmap to Healthy Communities

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2022-2024

Addressing the social determinants of health through a collaborative, upstream approach to remove barriers to social and economic opportunity, improve health outcomes, and advance equity

Taking Action on the Social Determinants of Health

Social determinants of health (SDOH), also known as basic needs, are known to greatly influence health outcomes. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), along with many other private and public partners across the state, and nationally, continue to develop and implement initiatives to improve health and social outcomes. The 2022-2024 MDHHS Social Determinants of Health Strategy takes a focused approach to align efforts at the state and local level for a greater impact in communities.

THE GOAL OF THE MDHHS SDOH STRATEGY IS TO:

Improve the health and social outcomes of all Michigan residents while working to achieve health equity by eliminating disparities and barriers to social and economic opportunity.

To guide these efforts, the MDHHS Policy and Planning Office will support the work being led by the respective program areas and partners by seeking additional resources and exploring opportunities for collaboration. The Policy and Planning Office will serve as a convener to lead the development of the Social Determinants of Health Strategy by connecting programmatic work and seeking opportunities to refine policies to best support Michigan communities.

Building bridges for collaboration

The SDOH Strategy was developed in collaboration with statewide partners and integrates the input of a diverse group of stakeholders. After the MDHHS Policy and Planning Office convened initial meetings with leaders involved with the previous Social Determinants of Health Strategy, focus shifted to conducting several brainstorming sessions that included MDHHS leaders and subject matter experts, including representatives from MDHHS administrations and program areas, as well as community-based organizations (CBOs).

A more thorough overview of the stakeholders involved and summaries of brainstorming sessions can be found within the full strategy document.



Focus Areas

Through a collaborative process of engagement with social determinants of health stakeholders throughout the Department, state agency partners, and local community partners, as well as an assessment of current SDOH efforts, focus areas were identified.

Three focus areas establish the foundation for the 2022 Overarching Social Determinants of Health Strategy: health equity, housing stability, and food security. MDHHS will continue to administer and support SDOH efforts in all domains; however, a focused effort on health equity, housing stability, and food security will allow Michigan to align efforts at the state, local, and community level for a greater impact as well as allow for more in-depth policy and program review.

2022 SDOH Strategy Focus Areas



HEALTH EQUITY means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

HOUSING STABILITY means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to safe, sufficient, and secure housing that meets their needs for a healthy life.

FOOD SECURITY means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

The intersection between focus areas

Many people experiencing housing instability and food insecurity live in under-invested neighborhoods and end up living in areas that lack additional resources, including healthy housing, good schools, quality healthcare, employment opportunities, and nutritious, affordable food. As the strategy progresses, connections between the focus areas and additional social determinants of health will be explored to guide future efforts.

Strategy Framework At-A-Glance

The *MDHHS Social Determinants of Health Strategy* outlines a three-pronged approach to address strategy focus areas:

SDOH Strategy Process



Improvement — Alignment — Innovation

2022 framework: An opportunity for improvement and alignment

To better align our efforts for a greater impact, in 2022, the SDOH Strategy will stratify our efforts based on opportunities for **improvement** and **alignment** by assessing current State of Michigan administered programs. Assessing the current landscape and aligning efforts is key. MDHHS program areas will examine and identify opportunities for improvement. Once opportunities for improvement are identified, each program area will implement process and qualitative improvements to current initiatives and policies, prioritizing items that are connected to focus areas. Improvements will be assessed and monitored to ensure measurable benefit.

2023 framework: Making space for innovation

In 2023 and beyond, the Social Determinants of Health Strategy will maintain **improvement** and **alignment** efforts, while broadening its approach to include **innovation**. New, innovative initiatives and cross-cutting policies to address upstream prevention will be explored and ideated. Program areas will assure capacity by identifying the funding and additional resources needed to implement new ideas. Additionally, opportunities within Medicaid will continue to be leveraged to link healthcare and social needs for our most vulnerable populations. There are many lessons to be learned that can be scaled and adapted from the State Innovation Model (SIM) to support multi-payer delivery and payment reforms that recognize the importance of the social determinants of health.

The Policy and Planning Office will align and support **Health in All Policies** efforts across the Department. Policy and Planning will serve as a bridge to remove barriers and leverage opportunities for the Department. Through these efforts more robust strategic objectives will be developed to leverage the efforts of other sectors to ensure that a health lens is applied.



**COMMUNITY
IS
STRENGTH.**

BE STRONG. LET'S LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

Supporting communities

A focus on moving upstream to change community conditions to improve long-term health outcomes through building resiliency and developing policies that support community-driven solutions is necessary. To achieve this, resident feedback will be incorporated throughout the development and implementation of the strategy to ensure a more equitable, community-based approach. Robust community engagement efforts will ensure that residents have the opportunity to provide meaningful input on policies and programs.

A greater impact: advancing equity and economic benefit

As healthcare costs continue to rise and health disparities persist, it is essential that we focus on upstream prevention to improve the quality of life of Michigan residents and more effectively improve health outcomes.

“These systematic, avoidable disadvantages are interconnected, cumulative, inter-generational, and associated with lower capacity for full participation in society. Great social costs arise from these inequities, including threats to economic development... and the social health of the nation.”

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY AND CITY HEALTH OFFICIALS
HEALTH AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE



Focus Area: Housing Stability

The Housing Stability focus area includes three priorities: supporting populations made vulnerable to housing instability, holistic approaches to healthy housing, and addressing housing access for people experiencing homelessness. Within each priority, specific strategies and objectives have been outlined to measure progress. For a more detailed outline of measurable objectives and related initiatives, as well as strategies to explore for 2023 and beyond, please review the full strategy document.



Priority: Supporting people made vulnerable to housing instability

Solutions to housing stability will require interventions tailored to people and communities disadvantaged by policies, practices, and systems. People and communities made vulnerable to housing instability include justice system-involved individuals, people who are pregnant and parenting, individuals in need of supportive housing following treatment for substance use disorder (SUD), older adults (seniors, people who are elderly, and aging), youth transitioning out of foster care, low-income households, tribal communities, immigrants, refugees, migrant workers, persons with disabilities, veterans, racial and ethnic minorities, and other people and communities facing barriers.

2022 strategies to support people made vulnerable to housing instability:



Strategy HS-1:

Expand access to stable housing for justice-involved individuals.

Strategy HS-2:

Expand access to stable housing for individuals in need of supportive housing following treatment for substance use disorder.

Strategy HS-3:

Improve access to healthy, affordable housing for families in need.

Strategy HS-4:

Increase access to healthy, affordable housing for older adults (seniors, people who are elderly, and aging).



Priority: Holistic approaches to healthy housing

Supporting healthy and stable housing requires a holistic approach, which includes strategies that incorporate lead mitigation, weatherization, and potable water access, as well as opportunities for alignment with strategies identified within Michigan's Statewide Housing Plan, including the removal of additional hazardous materials (including carbon, radon, asbestos, and mold) and energy efficiency.

2022 strategies to support healthy housing:

Strategy HS-5:

Address the gaps in lead inspection and abatement service availability to increase the volume of lead-safe housing in Michigan and reduce child lead exposure.

Strategy HS-6:

Expand weatherization efforts to improve energy efficiency, reduce the cost burden of utilities, and increase the volume of safe, weatherized homes in Michigan.

Strategy HS-7:

Improve potable water access to ensure a healthy home environment for improved hygiene, improved access to clean water, and improved sanitation.



Priority: Addressing housing access for people experiencing homelessness

Preventing and reducing homelessness by expanding eviction diversion programs and increasing and aligning resources to increase access to housing for people experiencing homelessness and people who are precariously housed.

2022 strategies to support housing access for people experiencing homelessness:

Strategy HS-8:

Build and expand technology solutions that increase care coordination, benefits access, and access to housing resources for people experiencing homelessness.

Strategy HS-9:

Develop tools to identify and prioritize people with high medical needs who are experiencing homelessness to more quickly connect them with the most appropriate housing resource.

Strategy HS-10:

Leverage long-term resources to sustain local eviction diversion programming and supports.



Focus Area: Food Security

The Food Security Focus Area includes three priorities for 2022: supporting people made vulnerable to food insecurity, streamlining processes to improve access to food benefits, and alignment on key food security reforms. Within each priority, specific strategies and objectives have been outlined to measure progress. For a more detailed outline of measurable objectives and related initiatives, as well as strategies to explore for 2023 and beyond, please review the full strategy document.



Priority: Supporting populations made vulnerable to food insecurity

Solutions to food security will require interventions tailored to people and communities disadvantaged by policies, practices, and systems. People and communities made vulnerable to food insecurity include, but are not limited to, people who are pregnant and parenting, older adults, school-aged children, veterans, people experiencing poverty, persons with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, and other people and communities facing barriers. This includes strategies to eliminate barriers to a person's ability to be food secure and supporting community assets that not only improve short-term access to food but strengthen systems for long-term food security.

2022 strategies to support people made vulnerable to food insecurity:

Strategy FS-1:

Strengthen and make it easier for families to connect to the existing food and nutrition safety net, including the MDHHS Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program and the Food Assistance Program (FAP), also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Strategy FS-2:

Capture information on areas and conditions of food insecurity statewide to enable strategic decision making.

Strategy FS-3:

Increase awareness and utilization of food and nutrition programs for older adults.

Strategy FS-4:

Continue to expand on the innovative and collaborative efforts to provide food benefits that were implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strategy FS-5:

Implement initiatives targeting racial injustice and inequity in food and nutrition.

FOOD SECURITY OVERARCHING GOAL:

Reduce food insecurity in Michigan and promote health equity by increasing access to good quality, nutritious food and implementing food system changes.



Priority: Streamlining processes to improve access to food benefits

An inward look at MDHHS programs and policies that support food security. Process and quality improvement efforts are needed to best serve Michigan residents. This could include enhancements to MI Bridges as well as other data-sharing and system interoperability solutions.

2022 strategies to support streamlining processes to improve access to food benefits:

Strategy FS-6:

Remove immediate and systemic barriers to access for food and cash assistance programs through process and program improvements.

Strategy FS-7:

Improve the MI Bridges platform to make the application and renewal process easier and more intuitive.

Strategy FS-8:

Increase cross-enrollment rates in public assistance programs through outreach and barrier mitigation.



Priority: Alignment on key food security reforms

Community, local, and state partnerships allow us to reach communities and provide enhanced support. Alignment of efforts with existing stakeholders and exploring opportunities to align with additional partners is vital to ensure that programs are connected for a greater impact.

2022 strategies to support alignment on key food security reforms:

Strategy FS-9:

Identify additional opportunities to align with recommendations from the Michigan Food Policy Council and the Michigan Poverty Task Force.

Strategy FS-10:

Leverage public-private partnerships and local coalitions to address systemic food access issues.





Focus Area: Health Equity

To advance health equity, the SDOH Strategy outlines actions in 2022 to support populations made vulnerable to adverse health outcomes, improve MDHHS-driven equity programs and policies, and strengthen community engagement to support community-driven solutions. Current measures for 2022 are limited in scope, with a focus on improving internal programs and policies and seeking out opportunities for alignment. Looking ahead, stakeholders will develop and implement strategies to address systemic barriers to health equity. Within each priority, specific strategies and objectives have been outlined to measure progress. For a more detailed outline of measurable objectives and related initiatives, as well as strategies to explore for 2023 and beyond, please review the full strategy document.



Priority: Supporting people made vulnerable to adverse health outcomes

2022, MDHHS will focus efforts on supporting populations made vulnerable to adverse health outcomes by tailoring interventions to people and communities that have been historically disadvantaged by policies, practices, and systems. This includes enhanced efforts to identify populations made vulnerable to adverse health outcomes.

2022 strategies to support people made vulnerable to adverse health outcomes:



Strategy HE-1:

Increase access to health and social programs and services through immediate barrier mitigation.



Priority: Improve MDHHS-driven equity programs and policies

Efforts to advance health equity within the Department are led by the Office of Equity and Minority Health (OEMH), within the Office of Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI), and enhanced by recommendations from statewide task forces, including the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's (LEO) Poverty Task Force and the Coronavirus Racial Disparities Task Force. The Policy and Planning Office seeks to integrate existing efforts to advance health equity within the SDOH Strategy, align efforts with statewide agencies, and integrate equity recommendations into all MDHHS programs and policies.

2022 strategies to improve MDHHS-driven equity programs and policies:

Strategy HE-2:

Align efforts with statewide agencies and health equity partners to coordinate efforts and collate resources.

Strategy HE-3:

Integrate recommendations from statewide Task Forces and entities supporting the advancement of health equity.

Strategy HE-4:

Implement an Equity Impact Assessment that will guide the decision-making process for evaluating the potential impacts of existing and future policies and programs.



Priority: Strengthen community engagement to support community-driven solutions

The strategy will place an extraordinary emphasis on engaging with residents to develop policies and funding that supports community-driven solutions. Michigan regions are diverse and therefore need community-driven strategies and targeted policies to support the needs of each community. Cross-sector collaboration at the state and community level allows us to develop robust and targeted strategies.

2022 strategies to strengthen community engagement to support community-driven solutions:

Strategy HE-5:

Engage benefits recipients and community members to obtain experiential knowledge to improve opportunities and services provided.

Strategy HE-6:

Build community capacity by supporting local efforts that improve regional collaboration and integration of social care into healthcare delivery.



Expansion of the Health Equity Focus Area

Looking ahead to 2023 and beyond, the Health Equity focus area will expand its priorities to include *utilizing data and analytics to understand and account for progress in addressing health disparities, increasing health equity policy development*, and more *explicitly addressing the impact of structural racism, marginalization, and discrimination* that are driving forces of the social determinants of health and health inequities.



Data Strategy

Maximizing data to support SDOH and health equity efforts

Housing stability, food security, and other social factors greatly affect the health and wellness of residents, particularly for those who experience racial disparities or other social vulnerabilities. MDHHS will work with many partners, including the Health Information Technology (HIT) Commission to develop and implement an updated health IT strategy to address how to coordinate care beyond clinical spaces and integrate health-related social care data. This innovative approach, of leveraging health IT to address both clinical outcomes and social determinants of health is outlined in the *Bridge to Better Health Report* released by the HIT Commission and MDHHS in February 2022. This report, along with collaboration with many other pioneers and leaders in this space, will be leveraged to help support the work of the SDOH Strategy.

2022 strategies to maximize data to support SDOH and health equity efforts:

Strategy DS-1:

Analyze quality and complete integrated data sets to measure the effects of policies and programs that address inequities.

Through the Race & Ethnicity in *Master Person Index (MPI)*, funded by the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, MDHHS strives to standardize and better aggregate how State agencies collect and report race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation data. The Master Person Index (MPI) uses a probabilistic algorithm to link and match data across the disparate MDHHS systems, creating a holistic view of an individual across the MDHHS Enterprise while also enforcing rigorous data privacy and security standards. The initiative seeks to design, develop and implement the addition of Race and Ethnicity values in the MDHHS MPI.



SDOH DATA STRATEGY:

The SDOH Data Strategy outlines action steps that will be taken to improve data quality, produce complete data sets, and measure the effects of policies and programs. To learn more about the SDOH Data Strategy, please review the full strategy document.

Strategy DS-2:

*Develop an interoperable infrastructure between health care and social care organizations through the establishment of a **Closed-Loop Referral System**.*

Strategy DS-3:

Implement a robust social determinants of health data strategy.

Strategy DS-4:

Develop capacity for regional collaboratives and academic institutions to evaluate community intervention strategies to end health disparities.

Closed-Loop Referral

As part of the of the 2022-2024 strategy, closed-loop referral policy and statewide recommendations will be developed through engagement across MDHHS and with statewide stakeholders. Effective closed-loop referral policy would support the efforts of the health equity, food security, and housing stability focus areas.

No Kids Hungry Closed Loop Referral Project in MI Bridges

The No Kids Hungry Closed-Loop Referral Project in MI Bridges seeks to increase access to critical services for residents and improve the ability of community partners to serve residents in coordination with the Department. As a result, we expect to see an increase in number of referrals sent by community partners on behalf of clients and an increase in the number of requests for assistance with MI Bridges submitted by users before creating accounts. Furthermore, we expect to see an increase in attachment to services among clients based on the tracking, support, and follow up provided by community partners. Ultimately, a greater attachment to food support services will lower the incidence of food insecurity in the state.

Next Steps for Michigan

Moving toward a more holistic approach to improve health outcomes and advance equity

MDHHS will continue to review data, and identify opportunities to improve data, to ensure that the Strategy is informed by current and emerging trends. As emerging opportunities arise, like the Build Back Better Act, MDHHS will explore opportunities to ensure that a health lens is applied as we all work together to support Michigan communities. An environmental scan of national best practices is underway, as MDHHS plans to move more upstream towards establishing economic mobility and environmental health as focus areas for 2023-2024. Supporting regional collaboration as well as a continued diverse stakeholder engagement are key approaches to ensure that the Strategy evolves with the everchanging landscape in Michigan.

Establishing vehicles to inform and drive the strategy

It is the ideal time to establish an Interagency Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Workgroup and, eventually, a statewide Coalition that will include representation across Michigan from community, as well as private and public, stakeholders. Action teams and workgroups, comprised of state and local partners, will continue to meet to determine opportunities for alignment, improvement, and innovation.

Additionally, there will be a reconvening of the MDHHS Health Information Exchange Workgroup who will work in collaboration with the HIT Commission, MDHHS leadership, and stakeholders to continue to expand our health information exchange capabilities and develop best practices for data governance.

Implementation of the SDOH Strategy

An implementation guide with recommendations and toolkits will be developed and shared to continue alignment across sectors and support continued collaboration.

