

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: WHAT FACTORS AFFECT OUR HEALTH?

According to the national County Health Rankings, “The County Health Rankings are based on a model of community health that emphasizes the many factors that influence how long and how well we live. The Rankings use more than 30 measures that help communities understand how healthy their

residents are today (health outcomes)

and what will impact their health in the future (health factors).” Local Health Departments and the core public health services they are

mandated to provide address these factors, contributing to 70% of health outcomes including length and quality of life. Clinical care contributes to only 20% of community health outcomes.

This model demonstrates the need for increased public health infrastructure in New York State.

Along with the factors listed above, a key social determinant and driver of

health inequities is structural racism. This manifests itself throughout past policy decisions related to the four main determinants: health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors and physical environments. Combined, these five factors underscore the need for a health across all policies to assure that policy decisions related to zoning, transportation, public safety, economic investment and educational opportunities explicitly consider institutional and structural racism and implicit bias and whether or not proposed policies might worsen or improve health equity and social justice.

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