

Social determinants of health

Social determinants of health are social and environmental conditions that may affect a person's health, functioning and quality of life.

Identifying these barriers to wellness may enable health care professionals and health plans to help people improve their access to care by providing a better understanding of the scope of factors influencing physical and mental well-being.

Social barriers to health

These may include a lack of access to:¹

- Adequate food
- Proper housing
- A safe environment
- Transportation
- Education
- The internet
- Social support
- Employment
- Child care



The numbers



20.5 million people were living in households with incomes two times below the U.S. poverty line.²



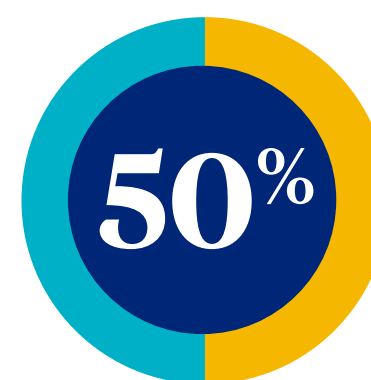
18.2 million households lack access to stable housing.³



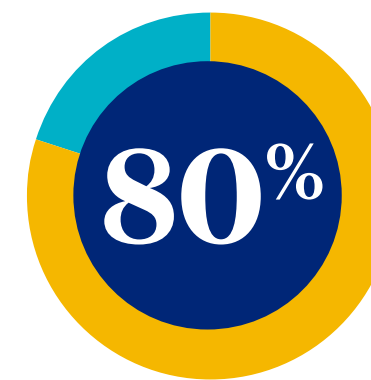
40 million people in the U.S. live in food-insecure households.⁴



42 million people lack broadband internet access.⁵



of health care costs are often generated by the most vulnerable populations.⁶



of a person's health can be influenced by social determinants of health.⁷



1 in 5

uninsured adults go without needed medical care due to cost.⁸

Social determinants and COVID-19

44%

of U.S. adults reported they or a household member had lost income from employment since March 2020.⁹

35%

have experienced anxiety or depression since the pandemic began.⁹

55%

had a hard time paying for routine household expenses in the last week of March 2021.⁹

9%

of adults struggled with food insecurity.⁹

¹ UnitedHealthcare Social Determinants of Health Protocol, 2020, <https://www.uhcprovider.com/content/dam/provider/docs/public/policies/protocols/Social-Determinants-of-Health-Protocol.pdf>

² HRSA Data Warehouse, 2018, <https://gisportal.hrsa.gov/factsheetmaps/>

³ Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2019, https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Harvard_JCHS_State_of_the_Nations_Housing_2019.pdf

⁴ United States Department of Agriculture, 2018, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/90023/err-256.pdf?v=0>

⁵ Broadband Now Research, 2020, <https://broadbandnow.com/research/fcc-underestimates-unserved-by-50-percent>

⁶ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, 2019, https://meps.ahrq.gov/data_files/publications/st521/stat521.shtml

⁷ Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2019, <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2019/02/medicaid-s-role-in-addressing-social-determinants-of-health.html>

⁸ Kaiser Family Foundation, 2020, <https://www.kff.org/uninsured/issue-brief/key-facts-about-the-uninsured-population/>

⁹ Kaiser Family Foundation, 2021, <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/one-year-into-the-pandemic-implications-of-covid-19-for-social-determinants-of-health/>