

Non-Medical Drivers of Health

March 8, 2024

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. We can improve health by supporting community conditions that impact health (e.g. environment, education, access to care, and other factors) through laws, policies, and community partnerships.
2. In 2022, factors such as food insecurity and education were significant contributors to healthcare costs for Texans.
3. Healthcare plans, clinic and hospital systems, and other healthcare providers can integrate non-medical drivers of health into their delivery systems to improve health conditions and outcomes.

Background

Non-medical factors that influence health, collectively known as *social determinants of health, foundations or non-medical drivers of health (NMDOH)* are conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age that contribute to health outcomes.^{1,2}

- We can improve overall health by improving community conditions through laws, policies, and community partnerships.³
- The Non-Medical Drivers of Health Framework encourages collaborations with communities across sectors to improve community foundations and health benefits.⁴

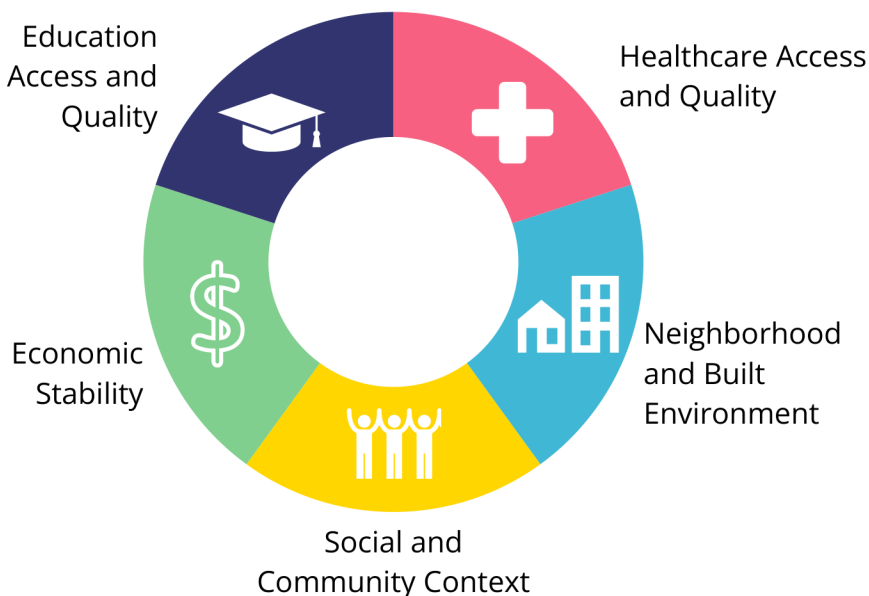


Figure 1. Non-Medical Drivers of Health Factors

Healthy People 2030, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion⁵

Examples: Non-Medical Drivers of Health*

- Safe housing
- Transportation
- Food security and access to healthy foods
- Opportunities for physical activity
- Income level
- Educational Opportunities
- Early childhood experiences
- Social support
- Neighborhood crime rates and exposure to violence
- Access to safe drinking water
- Air quality
- Language and literacy skills

*References 5 & 6

Achieving Optimal Health for Everyone

Non-medical factors, such as environment, education, and access to food and medical care are the most significant non-medical drivers of health contributors to healthcare costs for Texans.⁷



Food Insecurity/Food Access:

In 2022, Texas had the 2nd highest prevalence of food insecurity, higher than the national average.⁸



Income and Education

Hispanic Texans have lower income and educational attainment compared to non-Hispanic Texans.⁹



Healthcare Access:

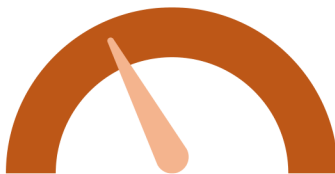
Hispanic Texans are less likely to have access to care compared to non-Hispanic Texans.⁹



Housing:

Black Texans are more likely to live in areas of crime and poverty compared to non-Black Texans.⁹

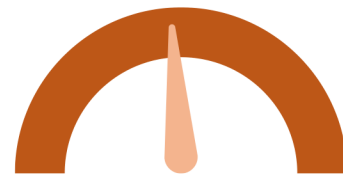
Texans are less likely to be in good/excellent health compared to the the United States average.^{9,10}



36%

Texas adults are in good/excellent health.

vs



48%

U.S. adults are in good/excellent health.

How Community Conditions Influence Non-Medical Drivers of Health

Community conditions affect non-medical drivers of health for populations across the U.S.¹⁰



Transportation and Location:

Rural residents typically travel farther than urban residents to access healthcare delivery sites.^{10,11}



Food Access:

Lower-income and non-White communities are less likely to have access to grocery stores with healthy food options compared to higher-income, White communities.^{10,12,13}



Broadband Access:

Residents in both rural areas and low-income urban communities often have limited access to high-speed internet, limiting education access, employment opportunities, and healthcare services.¹⁴



Extreme Weather Conditions:

Children, the elderly, people with chronic illnesses, low-income, and non-White communities are most likely to be affected by extreme heat/cold, drought, flooding, or hurricanes, resulting in malnutrition, hunger, negative mental health outcomes, and more.¹⁵

Programs in Texas

The Texas NMDOH Consortium provides a searchable index of NMDOH programs available in Texas that are sponsored by health system entities, health plans, medical or nursing educational institutions and clinics, and ambulatory practices.¹

On the Texas NMDOH Consortium website, you can search for programs by:



Program Sponsor



Populations



Texas Counties



Drivers of Health



Program Status
(Active/Inactive)



Health Condition(s)



Program Evaluated
(Yes/No)

Recommendations

Public Health Programs, Services, and Partnerships:

- Prioritize the collection of timely and actionable data to inform public health strategies.
- Promote data sharing and partnerships between public health departments, other sectors (e.g., food, housing, transportation), and stakeholders (e.g., healthcare entities).¹⁶
- Include public health experts in policy workgroups, task forces, and advisory committees.¹⁶
- Engage and integrate communities, through their representatives on committee and advisory groups and ensure groups are fully informed, engaged, and integrated into planning initiatives and programs.¹⁷
- Encourage cross-sector collaboration by co-funding programs and strategies to improve health.¹⁶
- Support evaluation of the social and economic impact of public health programs.¹⁶
- Support surveillance and emergency preparedness for extreme weather events.

Broadband Access, Healthcare, Education, Food Access, Housing, Safety, and Transportation:

- Address disparities in broadband access — especially in rural areas and low-income urban areas.¹⁴
- Expand access to health services for rural Texans through telehealth.¹⁸
- Improve education through funding and provision of high-quality pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and high school completion programs.¹⁸
- Increase access to and nutritional quality of school meals.¹⁸
- Promote local and sustainable farms and food systems.
- Enhance access to affordable and safe housing and the safety of homes.¹⁸
- Strengthen and fund crime prevention and enforcement strategies in high-crime neighborhoods.
- Strengthen transportation systems through street connectivity, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, safe routes to school, and public transit.¹⁸
- Actively engage community stakeholders in community initiatives.

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