

Addressing Social Drivers of Health

Children's Hospitals Take Action



CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS and health systems aim to improve children's health by providing clinical care and addressing the social drivers of health (SDoH) within their communities. SDoH include the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age, that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.¹

Eighty percent of health and health care outcomes can be attributed to factors such as safe and stable housing, access to food and transportation, social connection, and safety or environmental exposures. Addressing a communities' SDoH can improve health outcomes and takes a comprehensive approach with many sectors of society working together. These efforts are part of children's hospitals' and health systems' commitment to provide health care for all children and address social drivers at the patient, family, and community levels.

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¹ "Social Determinants of Health: Know What Affects Health." Accessed May 21, 2024.

Food Insecurity

In Aurora, **Children's Hospital Colorado** installed a 3,000-square-foot community garden on their hospital campus to provide healthy food to families, educate individuals and families on healthy eating, and launch a food prescription program.

A grocery store on wheels was created to serve select counties in Fort Worth, Texas, through a partnership between **Cook Children's Medical Center**, Tarrant Area Food Bank, and H-E-B Hunger Relief. This refrigerated trailer has shelves stocked with fruit, vegetables, and dairy products, and staff connects families to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other community resources.

Housing

In 2003, **Connecticut Children's Medical Center** in Hartford established the Healthy Homes program to improve health outcomes for children by removing hazards from homes. Since its inception, 3,000 homes now have safe and healthy environments. Launched to primarily address lead hazards, the program expanded to include additional health concerns such as asthma, radon, and safety-related injuries.

Children's Nebraska partners with Healthy Housing Omaha to address environmental needs in the home for children at high-risk for complications due to chronic health conditions. Home assessments identify mold and other potential triggers and the organization completes mitigation and remediation at no cost to the family.

Transportation

In Salt Lake City, **Primary Children's Hospital** boosts awareness of how Medicaid can assist with transportation to medical appointments and provides transit passes for the local bus or train system.

UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh families can receive free transportation to their preventive care appointments thanks to a partnership with Lyft.

Economic Support Services and Resources

While specific interventions are available related to food, housing, or transportation, families who screen positive for health-related social needs often have multiple areas where they could benefit from support.

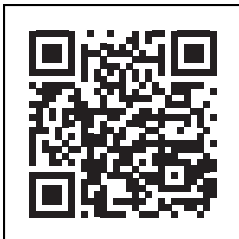
At The PLAYERS Center for Child Health at **Wolfson Children's Hospital** in Jacksonville, Florida, navigators help community members apply for Medicaid and SNAP and connects families with emergency food supplies, legal services, child care, public transit passes, employment support, rent and utility assistance, clothing, and diapers. Families are referred from emergency departments and pediatric providers.

Helping families achieve economic stability is a priority for the Boston Children's Health Accountable Care Organization (BCH ACO). **Boston Children's Hospital** and its affiliated specialists and primary care physicians participate in the MassHealth ACO program. BCH ACO partners with the Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) and the Boston Tax Help Coalition to help patient families file their taxes and access the Earned Income Tax Credit. In 2023, the program helped families access over \$35,000 in tax refunds and credits.

In Little Rock, **Arkansas Children's Hospital** Medical-Legal Partnership is available at no charge to assist families with health-related legal needs, including guardianship, name changes and other family law matters, educational needs, housing, social security, and insurance.

Through a partnership with Moms Helping Moms, **Children's Specialized Hospital** in Mountainside, New Jersey, provides diapers, wipes, and other baby essentials to families who need them. Since its inception in 2020, the program has served over 1,000 families.

Children's hospitals and health systems recognize that care extends outside the hospital walls. Addressing the social drivers of health for children and their families illustrates an organization's commitment to improving children's health and safety in all aspects of their daily lives.



Explore more resources

Scan the QR code to read more examples of how children's hospitals are taking action to address social drivers of health.

childrenshospitals.org/takingaction