



Aligning for Health

2021 Goals and Key Deliverables

Overall Objectives for 2021

- Continue to grow the influence of Aligning for Health among policymakers in light of the dramatically elevated focus on social needs amidst the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Shape discussions in Washington around social determinants of health – serving as a conduit for meaningful bipartisan interactions on social determinants, helping ensure that national priorities and interests move toward meaningful, constructive action; and
- Advance policy ideas, including legislation and/or regulation that empowers health organizations to advance health equity by addressing both health and social needs.

2021 Top Priorities

To achieve our 2021 Objectives, AFH will take action to achieve the following top priorities:

- Reintroduce and pass the **Social Determinants Accelerator Act (SDAA)** (H.R. 4004/S. 2986).
- Introduce and pass the **Leveraging Integrated Networks in Communities to Address Social Needs (LINC to Address Social Needs) Act**;
- Support the **introduction and passage of key bipartisan legislation** or the implementation of efforts by the Biden Administration to address **maternal health disparities**;
- **Work with CMS in developing guidance** providing outlining **best practices** and **financing opportunities** for states, plans, providers to advance health equity by addressing social needs, and in **advancing waiver opportunities, Innovation Center models**, and other regulatory opportunities that incent proactive actions to address social needs;
- If SDAA or LINC are passed, work with the Administration on implementation and act as a convening entity to bring together state and local governments and other stakeholders seeking to learn more and to increase their readiness and the quality of their applications;
- **Convene broad multi-sector stakeholder webinars and forums** focused on timely or advocacy focused priorities on a quarterly basis; and
- Continue to **promote the work of Aligning for Health and our Members** through biweekly newsletters and other communications.

2021 Deliverables and Activities

AFH will engage in several activities to fulfill our priorities, including through: 1) Congressional advocacy; 2) Administration advocacy; 3) policy development; 4) thought leadership and policy communications; and 5) strategic partnerships.

- **Congressional Advocacy**
 - Continue to advocate for SDAA (H.R. 4004/S. 2986) and the LINC to Address Social Needs Act in the House and Senate. These bills provide support for states and local governments to develop critical social determinants infrastructure.
 - AFH will support the introduction/reintroduction of both bills in the new Congress, continue to build stakeholder support, push for a

social determinants-focused hearing to highlight both bills, and identify vehicles for passage.

- Leverage state and local leaders and other stakeholders as advocates for SDAA and LINC and continue to cultivate examples of ongoing challenges and areas of opportunity.
 - Support the introduction and passage of key bipartisan legislation or the implementation of administrative efforts to address maternal health disparities, such as the Maternal Health Quality Improvement Act ([H.R. 4995](#)) and the Helping MOMs Act of 2020 ([H.R. 4996](#));
 - Launch a bipartisan *Social Determinants of Health Caucus*, which will facilitate dialogue between committees responsible for health and social programs, identify opportunities for Congress to act to help advance health equity by addressing health and social needs, and will share information about relevant legislation and initiatives.
 - Monitor and engage on a wide range of social determinant legislation and provide analysis to members.
- **Administration Advocacy**
 - Encourage CMS to issue social determinants guidance or other forms of technical assistance:
 - to states that would allow for spending related to services addressing health-related social needs to count towards the numerator of the MLR and to be considered in rate setting, including screening for social needs;
 - to provide clarity on the scope of health-related social services, and for which populations, the Medicaid program will reimburse; and
 - to providers and other stakeholders on social determinants, screening, and available resources to address social needs.
 - Liaise with (1) CMS in advancing Innovation Center models and other waivers and regulatory opportunities that incent proactive actions to address social needs across Medicare and Medicaid; and (2) HHS as it continues to develop Department-wide social determinants and health disparities strategies, improves collection and standards of social determinants data; and partners with other agencies on cross-sector programs to close gaps.
 - **Policy Development**
 - Continue policy development around the use of social risk factors in risk adjustment in Medicare and Medicaid. AFH will continue the process begun in 2020 to identify a set of draft principles and next steps.
 - Derive new policy ideas and initiatives from engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and advocates
 - **Thought Leadership and Policy Communications**
 - Organize periodic webinars to (1) highlight key advocacy priorities, (2) around timely and high-interest social determinants and health disparities topics.

- Convene multi-sector forums with individuals working on key initiatives and programs in the federal government, state government, health and human service programs, and community-based organizations. The roundtables would be themed and held biannually with goals of (1) sharing best practices and innovative ideas, and (2) elevating barriers and challenges to implementing social determinants strategies.
- Continue to publish biweekly newsletters and participate in, and speak on panels at, events, conferences, and other activities focused on social determinants, health disparities, and Medicaid.
- ***Strategic Partnerships***
 - If SDAA or LINC are enacted, serve as convener for state and local governments interested in learning more about SDAA/LINC, and help provide assistance for them in developing their proposals, and applications. Potentially partner with organizations like NASHP or the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
 - Maintain and develop new partnerships with key stakeholder groups and regularly seek their input as we seek to advance SDAA, LINC, and our other key activities throughout 2021.
 - Continue outreach to stakeholders in housing, food or energy assistance; consumer groups or minority groups; groups generally focused on poverty/empowerment; groups focused on pay for performance; health care stakeholders, and groups in Washington representing states and local governments. This will be accomplished in part through the Forums or other convenings.