

May 17, 2022

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
1035 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers:

Thank you for your commitment to addressing social determinants of health and health equity. We applaud your continued leadership on this issue to improve health and wellbeing for all Americans. We write today to urge you to build upon the important progress made by the Subcommittee on Health last summer by moving forward and passing into law legislation to advance equity and to address the social determinants of health.

We encourage the Committee to continue to advance important social determinants of health legislation that will empower organizations and communities across the country to work across sectors to foster partnerships, coordinate care and services, share data, and leverage available resources to drive improved and equitable outcomes; and that would catalyze federal cross-sector opportunities to address social determinants. Specifically, we recommend the committee act on the following priorities:

Coordinate efforts to address SDOH through actions to:

- Implement an interagency council across federal programs related to the social determinants of health, authorities, opportunities, and strategies across a wide range of federal agencies.
- Support SDOH activities at CDC and promote collaboration with other federal agencies, such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and others.

Support state, local, territorial, and tribal governments and nonprofits by:

- Providing social determinants accelerator planning grants for state, local and Tribal governments, nongovernmental entities or a consortium of entities to develop and implement plans that improve services for patients, improve outcomes in Medicaid and ensure evidence-based approaches to improve programs.
- Awarding grants to state, local, territorial, and Tribal health agencies and organizations to address SDOHs in target communities.

Educate future progress by supporting efforts to:

- Award grants to nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education to conduct research on SDOH best practices; provide technical assistance, training and evaluation assistance to target community grantees; and disseminate best practices.
- Collect and analyze data related to SDOH activities.
- Develop and evaluate the effectiveness of evidence-based approaches to coordinate services and improve outcomes for those participating in Medicaid.

Taken together, these elements will address the complexity that often stymies innovative cross-sector efforts or limits the scope and scalability of initiatives at the state, local, territorial, Tribal, and federal levels. We believe it is critical to ensure governments have the needed capacity and support to incubate innovative strategies – and the entire nation will benefit from the results of their effort.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and thank you again for your leadership and ongoing commitment to addressing social determinants of health. These efforts will improve the well-being of communities around the country and maximize coordination across important health and social service programs.

Sincerely,