



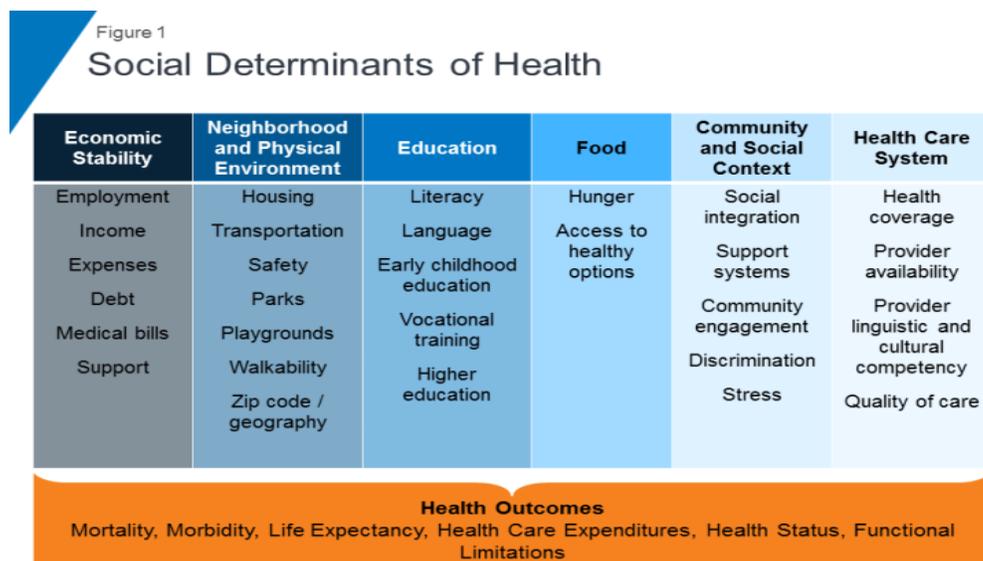
The Contemporary RNCM Role in Addressing Social Determinants of Health

By Kelly Kruse Nelles RN APRN-BC MS
June 30, 2021

Social determinants of health (SDoH) can be defined as factors that contribute to health or illness. These can include the environments in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks ([Healthy People 2020](#)).

The World Health Organization Commission on Social Determinants of Health determined that “the inadequate health of some individuals and groups is due to inequities resulting in health disparities and poorer health outcomes”.

Registered Nurses practicing in Contemporary RN Case Manager, Care Manager and Care Coordinator roles share a commitment to addressing the impact of socioeconomic status, environment, education, adequate housing and food insecurity as significant factors impacting the health and well-being of the populations they care for.

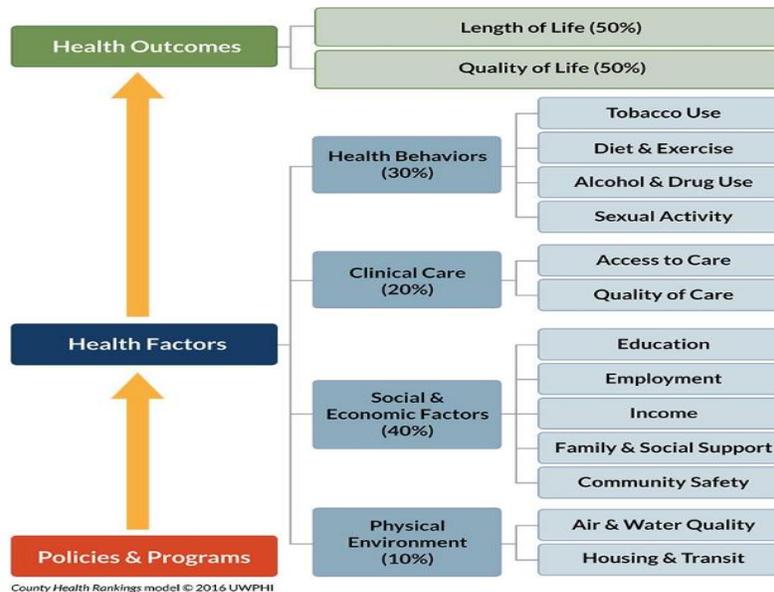


Source: Kaiser Family Foundation

Social determinants have been described as “the causes of the causes” and provide a framework for RNCMs to better understand the root causes that contribute to an individual’s health, the reasons health disparities exist and how health equity is achieved by all people regardless of socioeconomic status. A commitment to addressing SDoH is deeply rooted in nursing’s social mission to advocate for social justice and health equity. Social determinants move beyond defining health in terms of medical care.



Many assume that clinical care has the greatest impact on health outcomes however, when we examine the data from the County Health Rankings, what we learn is that clinical care only impacts health outcomes by 20%.



Contrast this with the Social & Environmental Factors of education, employment, income, family & social support, and community safety which have a 40% impact on health outcomes.

Now combine this with physical environment at 10% and we can see that these social determinants are responsible for impacting the health outcomes of quality of life and life expectancy by 50%. Notice also that these social determinants can be directly impacted by policies and programs designed to address “the causes of the causes” and improve factors affecting health.

Interestingly health behaviors contribute 30% and added together these factors combined have an 80% impact on health outcomes.

This does not mean that clinical care is not important rather it challenges RNCMs to expand their thinking and recognize that social determinants have a significant impact on the health outcomes of populations.

Learn More at: www.nationalrncm.com