

Improving Social Determinants of Health Act of 2020 **Senator Tina Smith (D-Minn.) and Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn.)**

Social, environmental, and economic conditions—including housing, employment, food security, education, and access to health care—have a major influence on individual and community health.¹ These conditions, known as Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), are those in which people live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect their health, functioning, and quality-of-life.²

While it is commonly believed that good health is due to medical care, clinical treatment accounts for only 10 to 20 percent of an individual's overall health. Meanwhile, around 80 to 90 percent of healthy outcomes are driven by these SDOHs.³ Communities of color are disproportionately impacted by health conditions, including COVID-19, due to factors affecting SDOH. Specifically, communities of color face challenges accessing quality health care, healthy food, suffer greater exposure to air pollution, and are hardest hit by growing levels of poverty and unemployment.^{4,5,6} To address health disparities and reduce health inequities, it is critical for communities to address SDOHs.

The **Improving Social Determinants of Health Act of 2020** would authorize the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to create a program to improve health outcomes, reduce health inequities, and improve capacity of public health agencies and community organizations to address SDOHs. This legislation will:

- Coordinate across CDC to ensure programs consider and incorporate social determinants of health in grants and activities.
- Award grants to state, local, territorial, and Tribal health agencies to address social determinants of health in target communities.
- Award grants to nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education to conduct research on best practices for addressing the social determinants of health.
- Coordinate, support, and align social determinant of health activities at the CDC with other federal agencies.
- Collect and analyze data related to social determinant of health activities.
- Authorize \$50 million annually for program activities.

The bill is endorsed by more than 195 national, state, and local organizations.

¹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3863696/>

² <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health#:~:text=Social%20determinants%20of%20health%20are,of%2Dlife%20outcomes%20and%20risks.>

³ <https://nam.edu/social-determinants-of-health-101-for-health-care-five-plus-five/>

⁴ <https://moveforhunger.org/hunger-racial-equity-issue>

⁵ <https://www.epi.org/publication/black-workers-covid/>

⁶ <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/03/11/702348935/study-finds-racial-gap-between-who-causes-air-pollution-and-who-breathes-it>