Looking to 2030 After 2020

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director
Photo: Pro16 Productions

Social Determinants of Health rose to stardom last year.

This is not a new concept, but a national crisis highlighted why these determinants are so important. One of Healthy People 2020’s five overarching goals is specifically related to Social Determinants of Health (SDOH): “Create social, physical, and economic environments that promote attaining the full potential for health and well-being for all.”

What are Social Determinants of Health?

Those public health references that shape our lives, whether you know what they are or not. Our lives are impacted by them. Policy is developed for them. Money is acquired to offer services to impact them.

Social Determinants of Health are 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.

Social Determinants of Health can be grouped into five domains: 1) Economic Stability; 2) Education; 3) Access and Quality; 4) Health Care Access and Quality; 5) Social and Community Context.

Examples of SDOH

• Safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods
• Racism, discrimination, and violence
• Education, job opportunities, and income
• Access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities
• Polluted air and water
• Language and literacy skills

The Goals of the Five Identified Domains

• Help people earn steady incomes that allow them to meet their health needs
• Increase educational opportunities and help children and adolescents do well in school.
• Increase access to comprehensive, high-quality health care services to meet their health needs.
• Create neighborhoods and environments that promote health and safety.
• Increase social and community support.

This national focus is brought close to home by all of the conversations and strategies we have had to manage. We have had to worry about Covid-19 and possible long-term effects, but we have also had to worry about keeping up with any chronic diseases that we are dealing with as well. Studies have shown that last year and into this year, people in African American and Latinx communities have been hit hard with Covid-19 and are dying at a higher rate than other races. One of the main reasons is the health disparities we have had to face historically. This list includes inadequate access to healthcare and insurance. Also, most of us are frontline workers in industries where we are unable to stay home. Lastly, there has been a very large gap in testing and supplies within our communities.

This year the Office of Minority Health is focused on everyone being vaccine ready. As of today in North Carolina, we are vaccinating anyone in Group 4. This group includes those 16 and older, essential workers, and people who are living with chronic conditions.

If you are part of this group but not quite ready to get vaccinated, I challenge you to take some time to find out all there is to know about getting vaccinated. Write down any questions you may have about the vaccination. How was it made? Are there any side effects that could occur? Then speak with your healthcare provider. Make time to speak with your family about your reasons and considerations for getting vaccinated.

April is National Minority Health Month

by Kelly White, MHE, MPH, ABIPA Health Education Program Manager

We not only have had to worry about Covid and possible long-term effects, but we have also had to worry about keeping up with any chronic diseases that we are dealing with as well.

Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

In the midst of this pandemic, taking care of yourself is more important now than it has ever been.

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