

Health Builder



A Manual for Addressing the Social Determinates of Health

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A Build Neighborhoods Manual
BuildNeighborhoods.com



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Addressing the Social Determinants of Health

There needs to be a dynamic shift in how healthcare addresses the social determinants health. It is not enough to recognize the determinants, hospitals now need to address the root cause within the community.

Social Determinates of Health is a vast topic that seems to grow exponentially the more you think about it. Healthcare organizations are typically focused on the micro or patient level where they are continuously thinking about what treatment to prescribe or social need should be addressed. Moving their focus to the macro or community level is very difficult as they are being asked to step outside of their wheelhouse. With their inner voices screaming to stay in their comfort zone, it is difficult to believe that they will ever embrace the macro level. This, however, is exactly what I intend to help them do.

Once healthcare begins to address a patient's health by influencing the social aspects of their environment they live in, then they are entering the world of community development. For decades, even centuries, a variety of professions have been trying to improve living conditions in communities. In the beginning, health conditions were a big issue in urban settings, leading to efforts on many fronts. In the more recent past, health issues have taken a back seat to other equally important goals of equality, public safety, transportation and other urban issues.

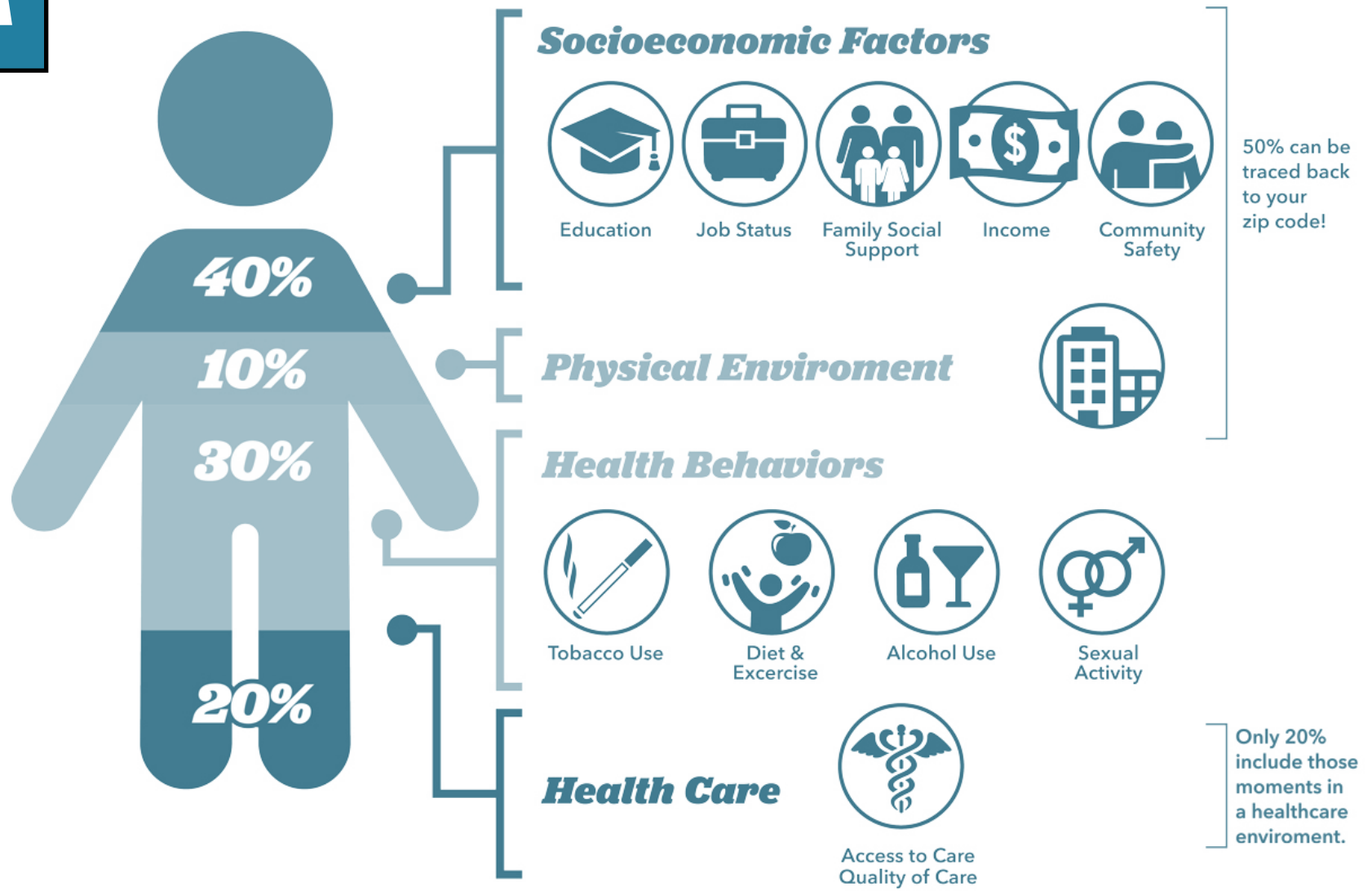
We now live in a time where the medical community has realized the community impacts a patient's health more than the treatment they provide. They are being called to join the other professions and industries related to community development, but the target has now evolved. Healthcare must now find ways to influence a more diverse list of urban ills than simply poorly designed tenement housings or incompatible land-use. They must now find solutions to economic development, education, public safety, and civic engagement.

The big question is how? When healthcare's focus has been on everything that happens inside their walls, with only a few organizations looking out into the community for improvement of outcomes. This book is designed to present an approach that should be modified to meet local needs while still providing the reader with confidence that they can engage the patient's environment.



Social Determinants of Health Diagram

Below is what is generally accepted as the breakdown of factors affecting a patient's health:



Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)



Categories of Social Determinants of Health

Below are the five categories and descriptions of social determinants of health as defined by the US Centers for Disease Control. There are variations; however they are very close to the CDC definition.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

The connection between people's access to and understand of health services and their own health. This domain includes key issues such as access to healthcare, health insurance coverage, and health literacy.

EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY

The connection of education to health and wellbeing. This domain includes key issues such as graduating from high school, enrollment in higher education, educational attainment in general, language and literacy, and early childhood education and development.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The connection between characteristics of the contexts within which people live, learn, work, and play and their health and wellbeing. This includes topics like cohesion within a community, civic participation, discrimination, conditions in the workplace, and incarceration.

ECONOMIC STABILITY

The connection between the financial resources people have – income, cost of living, and socioeconomic status – and their health. This area includes key issues such as poverty, employment, food security, and housing stability.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The connection between where a person lives – housing, neighborhood, and environment – and their health and wellbeing. This includes topics like quality of housing, access to transportation, availability of healthy foods, air and water quality, and neighborhood crime and violence.



The Approach: An Overview

The determinants are calling healthcare into the field of community development. It is one thing to be called another to know where to start.

Research has found there is a direct correlation between Social Determinants and low health scores. Which poses the question, can we improve health scores by addressing the social determinants of health?

Healthcare finds themselves on the edge of a new frontier, where few have gone before them. Healthcare organizations will need to decide if they need to take action in their community as a way to improve the overall health of their patients or try to remain on their current course of focusing on actions within their four walls. Insurance payors are putting pressure on health service providers to go beyond their current way of operating. Organizations may not have a choice but to accept this new reality and move forward. Going back to the old model does not appear to be an option and yet they are not sure how to navigate the path ahead; how will healthcare address the social determinants of health?

Community Development

Four out of five of the determinants fall into a general category of community development. Hospitals are now being drawn into this arena where other individuals and organizations have been fighting the battle for longer than anyone can remember. Healthcare organizations are a new participant, but may be the missing ingredient for success. Their approach cannot be to take on the many hats of community development, but to organize and lend their resources in a meaningful way to maximize impact.

Where to Start: The People

In community development, as in healthcare, the approach should always start with the people. Healthcare organizations are patient focused so this should match their approach. By starting with the people on the street level you can truly understand not only their needs, but their strengths. As you pursue ideas from these

conversations, your actions will make more sense and you will truly understand the “why” of what you are undertaking.

Building relationships and social capital will be the foundation everything is built on. One of the biggest challenges we face in community development is the break down in communication and relationships in our communities. We cannot do anything if people don’t know their neighbor’s name or haven’t had a conversation about their block, neighborhood, or city.

Leadership

Healthcare organizations cannot make decisions for their communities; however they can play a major role in building the capacity of leaders and orchestrate resources. The community will need grassroots leaders to step forward and make decisions. This leadership will likely need to be developed to produce people with the capacity to engage you in the process. It will not be enough to say there are one or two capable leaders, there will need to be many. This leadership will evolve into action committees formed to address different topic areas such as public safety, housing, economic development and others.

Inject Health Awareness and Education

In an effort to ensure these activities ultimately impact health scores and your bottom line, you need to discover new ways to inject health into every community-based effort. Healthcare outreach and provision of services will be part of the solution on every front.



The Approach

Strategy For Neighbors

Organize, Train, Plan

Involving the people of a neighborhood is important to the success of any community development venture; however, a strategy must be used to do it right.

To sum up the approach with residents, you will need to work with them to organize, train, and plan their neighborhood. This will position the neighborhood organizations to have the required capacity to engage other organizations about their neighborhood. This builds partners who we share common goals and have the ability to work with you.

Organize

You will need to work with the people on the streets of their communities. This is where you will want your message to reach and who you want to benefit from your actions. To accomplish this, you need to work with leaders on every street. The challenge is there typically is not a leader on every street. If you do accomplish this, there will simply be a large group of voices making requests and expressing expectations you will find difficult to meet. These street level leaders need to be organized into neighborhood groups who develop a unified voice with lists of goals and needs for their neighbors.

Failure to take this step will leave you wanting for a direct connection to the people you want to serve. Most efforts need a certain amount of input from the public and if what comes to you are random comments and insights, you may make poor choices and experience a higher rate of failure than you need to.

The need to organize is a well-established approach in community development. It is also difficult to accomplish if one is in a hurry and under a development timeline. Therefore, you need to do this prior to discussion of projects and improvement efforts.

Train

When volunteers step forward, they will likely not have the exact background or skill set to fill the role they volunteer for. You can either accept this or take steps to provide them needed training and information to make them better. In many ways, you owe them a fair chance to be successful if you are asking them to step out of their comfort zone.

Block Captains need training to hold productive meetings and how to get answers or resources for their neighbors. You will need them to speak at neighborhood meetings as they convey the ideas and needs of their street. This can be done in a single session of training that is then supported by a resource person who can later talk about the challenges they face and give them pointers.

Neighborhood leaders take on the responsibilities of the larger organization, sometimes representing 100 to 3,000 home neighborhoods. You can offer several specific training sessions and then utilize the training from other organizations to build upon the foundation you have provided.

Plan

The developing of neighborhood plans is an organizing and training process all in itself. Through this process potential leaders are identified, the need for training becomes evident, and planning makes the neighborhood organization more legitimate as they have something to show people when asked what they plan to do. Proper planning takes some one to make sure the process is transparent, subject matter experts are on hand, and that what is talked about gets put on paper.

It is hard to imagine any organization spending money in a neighborhood without the benefit of a plan to assure them the spending is warranted. Antidotal assessments can easily lead an effort down the wrong path. With data, best practices, and local insight, a plan can give leaders and partners the confidence they need to expend resources when they are limited. Funders are usually impressed with organizations that have a well-researched thought-out plan.

You can help facilitate the planning process for neighborhoods. By attracting other professionals to assist in the process, neighborhood groups can have actionable plans that lead to the improvements everyone is seeking.



The Approach

Developing Community Partnerships

Healthcare, Community Development, Social Services

There are resource organizations in the community for healthcare to work with. Some are in sectors hospitals never have encountered before.

To sum up the approach to develop partnerships, you will develop partnerships with community-based nonprofits and arrange for assistance to increase their capacity to accomplish their mission. In many ways, their mission is your mission. Your approach cannot be to simply ask them to fulfill their mission and not recognize the realities they face.

Health Care

Within your communities are nonprofits serving the population in topics such as nutrition, substance abuse, mental illness, and others. You may be currently referring patients to these organizations for assistance you are not in a position to provide. The truth however, is many of these organizations are limited in resources and unable to reach their potential. If you are to rely on them, you will need them stronger.

Community Development

There will be nonprofits with community development missions critical to the effort in most of the communities you serve. They could be neighborhood organizations, housing development corporations, or economic development entities. These will be important partners but before you start asking them to play a role in your strategy, you must realize many will need some type of assistance to reach their true potential. You will need strong partners so it is in your self interest to see them improve.

Social Services

There are so many different needs in the area of social services. The organizations operating in your communities are engaged in overwhelming struggles with limited resources. Although their mission is daunting, you as an organization need them to be successful. Groups who help with job training, education, cultural needs, and similar needs of the community are vital to addressing the social determinants of health.

It's Not Just About the Money

It is true that all organizations could benefit from more funding; however, there are other ways you could help them improve. Board development, organization retreats, gap analysis, and other steps could greatly assist them in performing their mission. Your organization doesn't need to be the one providing the assistance in all cases, but rather making sure they get the help they need.

Your organization does not need to provide direct assistance, but connect them to those who can. You can also play a role in attracting funds from local companies and possibly national resources as well. By giving attention to their needs, you can improve a community's resource organizations.

Organizations can easily get caught up in their day-to-day mission and find themselves neglecting their own development. You can have a positive impact on the organizations which will translate to progress in areas of social determinants you do not have experience in and nor the desire to start.



The Approach

Strategy For Organizations

Understand, Consult, and Invest

How healthcare approaches these organizations is just as important as how they engage the people. A clear strategy is required.

To sum up the approach with organizations, large and small, is to take steps to expand their capacity to pursue their mission. There is an important role for you to play with your community partners that no one else is playing. You will need to first understand their mission, strengths, and weaknesses while identifying what opportunities there may be to address social determinants. You will then bring subject matter experts in to work with them. With a clear path identified, you can then provide additional resources through fundraising or direct donations.

Understand

The first step after identifying what community organizations are present in the community is to get to know them. Through a series of interviews and shadowing, you will gain a thorough understanding of who they are, what they want to be, and what is holding them back.

A typical organization will need staff development, board training, and insight from people experienced in their industry. So many neighborhood groups and other nonprofits are born and grow up out a sheer need for their role or services. Many times they survive by pure luck and will power. These same groups have become so involved in their day to day activities, it is hard for them to focus on how to improve.

You can play a role of inventorying organizations and then developing a profile of their strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Your organization can then work with them to develop a strategy to go farther in their pursuit of their mission.

They will have definitely pursued improvement in the past; the difference will be having a partner who can leverage other resources for them.

Consult

With a plan in place, you would then find local subject matter experts to assist the organization. By creating a multi-faceted team of experts, you could help organizations become stronger more capable versions of themselves.

The experts could address topics like financial management, fundraising, marketing, human resources, and other important topics. This assistance could come in the form of one-on-one sessions, workshops, and presentations. With the wide acceptance of video conferencing, experts and organizations can interact from their office, home, or in person.

There is a real opportunity to provide this service either with volunteers from your organization or others in the area. You can also find experts at a distance who can provide consulting services for a fee. If you think it is critical to the organization's success, you may want to underwrite it.

The proposed model could be seen as a "dream team". You can build a separate team for each organization and pool the lessons learned and share with all the participating organizations.

Invest

There is little to be accomplished if you do not make an investment in the community. It is much smarter to support organizations doing the work than to take on the work yourselves. This approach does not remove the necessity for you to invest.

Simply providing funds to an organization is a recipe for disaster. There will be little assurances your funds will be wisely spent; however if you follow this model and create a relationship and know they have positioned themselves to be successful, then you will see success.

You may find yourselves investing in operations, programs, or projects. These activities should line up with addressing the social determinants of health. By having a true partnership with them, you can introduce elements of health awareness, education, and services into whatever they do. This is a missing piece that could make all the difference in the effort to improving health outcomes.

Small organizations will require small amounts of funding, but could still be impactful. Large organizations could respond with large impactful activity.



Taking Action

So what is the strategic approach to addressing social determinants? It consists of weaving together the numerous components and focusing them in a defined, manageable geographic area.

1

Inventory Organizations

Identify and list the existing organizations involved in both health and community development.

2

Strengthen Nonprofit Partners

Strengthen community partners to enable them to address social determinants of health in ways beneficial to everyone.

3

Build Grassroot Partners

Recruit, train, and support neighborhood organizations as a way to ensure grassroots support of the overall strategy to address social

4

Recruit Volunteers

Recruit, train, and support neighborhood organizations as a way to ensure grassroots support of the overall strategy to address social determinants.

5

Focused Area

Focus on a reasonable sized area where all resources are brought to bare to avoid diluting your solution across an unmanageable sized area.

6

Data Driven

Develop, gather, analyze community health data to drive activity and investments in the targeted area and the community as a whole.

7

Every Resource

Bring every resource that can be found or developed to be involved to allow for the best possible outcome.

8

Leadership Role

Hospitals or clinics should play a leadership role in the development and management of the strategy by dedicating the right staff to the design and implementation phases of the approach.

9

Major Investments

With trust and a clear strategy, healthcare should make major investments in projects or activity that are crucial for the success of the strategy.

10

Must Be A Multi-Faceted Response

Avoid focusing on a single topic response to a multi-faceted situation.



Inventory Organizations

You will need to know what you have to work with regarding other resource organizations.

Unless your organization desires to be all things to all people in the community, you will need to understand the community landscape with regard to several key topic areas. Your effort needs to know more about what resources are available in your community. Many of the health related organizations will be known by your staff and leadership; however social service and community development type organizations may not be as well known. Furthermore, knowledge of even the existing health-related resources may be limited. Before engaging these resources, some homework should be performed.

Basic Information

For every organization in the community, some basic information needs to be gathered and organized in a document or spreadsheet. This can then be shared with people as they join the effort to improve the community.

Organization Name	Address	Website
Email	Number of staff	Age of the organization
Executive Director	Board members	MissionRecent Activities
Services/Programs		

Categories

These organizations will generally fall within a list of categories shown below. It is important to organize them to demonstrate what topics are well served and where there may be gaps.

Education

This will include PTAs, tutoring, and teacher associations.

Housing Development

Nonprofits engaged in producing housing through renovation or new construction, property management, or land banking should be listed here.

Economic Development

This will include both nonprofit and government agencies dedicated to attracting or promoting business within the community. Job training, job placement, lenders, and real estate developers will be listed here.

Social Services

Those organizations engaged in food insecurities, therapy, provision of basic necessities, and advocacy are types of organizations that should be listed in this category.

Health Services

Organizations who engage directly in health issues such as diabetes awareness, cancer screenings, and other activities will fall into this category.

Analysis

With this information summarized in a spreadsheet or similar document, it will be clear what resources are available and what gaps are present as well. There is plenty of room for organizations in every category as the need will always overpower the available resources. A positive sign is where you see either a significant number of organizations in any one category or a very strong entity with high capability. Negative signs would be few or no resource organizations within a category or weak or brand-new entities with few accomplishments.

Your strategy moving forward would be to add fuel to existing organizations while encouraging new organizations to be created where there are weak or no resources within a category. Often when there is an unmet need in the community there is someone or a group wanting to address it. As you perform your research you will want to identify what is hindering efforts such as lack of funding or knowledge within the community.



Inventory Organizations

Continued

In a later chapter, more instruction will be shared regarding building relationships and strengthening organizations. This initial research will be invaluable as you later meet directly with leaders and staff of these organization where you will start to see the connections and how they interact with each other.

Gathering the Information

Researching organizations can start with internet searches that can lead to organization websites where much of the information you are seeking can be found. With this first step completed, meeting with known community leaders or insiders can reveal more organizations or deeper understanding of those on your list.

One of the interesting discoveries will be the relationships between the board members of different organizations. Often, board members will be involved in multiple nonprofits or a local family or corporation will have members engaged in several different organizations showing a common theme of where their overall interest lies.

2

Strengthen Nonprofit Partners

If your organization is not going to provide all the required services, then you will need strong partners. Most communities are not blessed with well funded, trained, and capable nonprofits.

In the world of social services, there is an environment of referral making. One nonprofit will refer a client to another organization that provides a service they do not. For most of the referrers, it is the best they can do and they hope everything works out for the referral. What is not known is whether the organization the client is referred to can help the individual. Why would they not be able to assist the referred person? It comes down to the capacity of agency to fulfill their mission. The lack of capacity, whether it is financial, resources, or ability, can impact the outcome of your referral. The upside of a highly capable organization is they could do so much more than what is expected.

As a healthcare organization, you need to consider the capacity of organizations in your community if you are relying on them to address the social determinants of health. If you look in the area of affordable housing, and your community is served by a two-person organization with very few sources of funding to renovate houses, you may need to pause. How effective can they be in providing affordable housing for a population of 30,000 or 100,000?

The hard reality is they will not be effective at all, at the scale your organization needs. This hypothetical organization needs assistance if they are going to move to the next level of capacity. What I am suggesting is that your organization should take steps to help them grow in several ways: leadership, financial management, strategy, fundraising, and other critical areas.

One big mistake is to give a struggling organization like this a large sum of money and expect great things. It doesn't matter how charismatic, well meaning, or even experienced they are in developing a project, if their organization has major shortcomings in the areas mentioned. They want to be successful and you need them to be successful if you want the quality and quantity of safe, affordable housing to increase.

One Approach

Consider creating a Dream Team to provide organizational assistance to your future partner. A dream team consists of experts who can analyze, create an improvement plan, and then help the organization reach the next level in capacity. The term expert here refers to simply someone who is very knowledgeable in a topic. They can be recruited from within your organization, the local community, or from a distance if you can't find locally the needed expertise to work with the staff and leaders of the organization in question.

Self Interest

When analyzing the self interest of both groups, your healthcare organization and the nonprofit, you will see this is a win-win situation; however, there are some things to consider. First, before you do anything, you must build a relationship with the organization. It is a little insulting to them for you to simply walk in and declare them in need of assistance. Once a relationship is established, you need to conduct an interview with them to understand their current state and get a general idea of their areas of need. This can then be followed by an offer to arrange assistance in the form of maybe a retreat or series of meeting with resources that could help them.

You will also need to offer some type of incentive. This could be a small grant to be used during or after their effort to increase their capacity or funding to allow them to take on a larger project, introduce a needed service, or similar activity. It is always smart to start out relatively small and grow in scale over time.

The Result

As the organization you are working with grows in capacity, their output increases in the social determinant category they fit into. Your organization will see improvement on that front without actually engaging in the activity, allowing you to repeat the process with other organizations involved in the same or different determinant.



Strengthen Nonprofit Partners

Continued

Making it Happen

This all seems easy to understand, but how does one actually do it? The following is a proposed approach; however, this is not a tried-and-true approach, but based on a logical set of steps that are completely customizable to your local needs.

Building the Relationship

What is being proposed is a considerable undertaking and offering on the part of your healthcare organization; however, it still has to be sold to the organization you want to form this partnership with. The risk is you may easily insult them with your offer of improvement when you really have their best interest in mind. So, start casual and build up the relationship.

Meet for Coffee

A great place to start is to have someone mid to high-level reach out to the organization's leader and ask to meet for coffee at a local restaurant. Share with them during the invitation that you are interested in the topic of social determinants and would like to understand their organization and the role it plays in the improvement of the community.

When you meet with them, explain a little more about how your organization and the industry is becoming more aware of how the climate in the community affects health care. Then get them to describe how and why their organization got started. A great question to ask is what challenges do they encounter in accomplishing their mission.

If the conversation is going well, try to relate your organization's mission to address the social determinants of health and their mission. Coming away from the meeting with a feeling that your two missions are aligned would be a great accomplishment. A great way to set the stage for a follow-up encounter would be to tell them you would like to bring some other people in your organization out to meet them and/or tour their facility. Let them know you are trying to introduce your staff to the concept of community development and they would benefit from better understanding how their organization works.

Follow-up Meeting

You should consider bringing two to four people from your organization to get to know the potential partner. Bringing along a representative from population health, primary care, or similar departments would make a lot of sense. Include at least one person with a VP title would start to emphasize the importance of the interaction.

During this second meeting, you will want to revisit a couple of the challenges they mentioned in the first meeting. You can then follow this with sharing your organization may want to help their organization with some consulting services designed to help their internal development. Based on the initial response, you will be able to tell if they would welcome the assistance.

They may ask for more details, which you could share the following:

“Using some of the staff from our organization, we would try to complete a full assessment of your organization at this time and capture where you want to be in categories such as fundraising, leadership, board development, mission related capacity, and similar topics. We would then assemble some resources from within the community and the industry to work with you to pursue what needs to be done”

Assessing the Capacity

It would be helpful to gather a few people you feel are good at understanding the makings of a strong nonprofit organization. They will be more comfortable asking about the nonprofit's capacity and can ask follow-up questions that will give better insight. Set a time where the two groups can meet and pick a neutral location where everyone will be comfortable.

Start the conversation with the statement that your organization does not have all the answers to the challenges they may have, but would like to document the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to their organization. With this, your organization hopes to find resources to assist their nonprofit achieve their goals through building a stronger organization.

One useful approach is to write a business plan as a result of what is discovered. Each section could contain current state with recommendations added once you find a resource to work with them. The business plan could be a physical product of everyone's effort.

Designing and Recruiting the Team

Historically, nonprofits need help on multiple fronts, but typically they are: Finance, Leadership Development, Strategic Planning, and industry specific knowledge. After

2

Strengthen Nonprofit Partners

Continued

assessing their needs, the next step is to develop a dream team of consultants that will meet with them and develop ways to build off their strengths and address their needs. The best dream team will be a combination of resource people from within your organization, the community at large, and from other similar nonprofits in the region.

Recruiting from within your organization makes a lot of sense. Having a VP or director from your organization involved in providing assistance to a local nonprofit simply looks good. It also gives you an internal person who can help you evaluate the nonprofit when considering future investment of funds. It is really important to find ways to involve your organization in the effort of community development vs. relying solely on investing dollars.

One word of caution is to avoid the temptation of placing one of your leaders on their board during this process. This could appear to be a take-over instead of an infusion of assistance. If you already have a person on their board, let them remain in the position. Some may see it as beneficial to have your leader on their board, but others will be very protective of their independence.

For finding resources in the community, think about who do you know from other companies that would find the idea of coaching or instruction attractive to them. Keep in mind other companies need public relation boosts as well. Beyond PR, there are people who simply love sharing their knowledge. To find people, you may need to start some conversations with your connections to ask if they know anyone in their company that would be interested in helping a local nonprofit with the needed topics such as finance or strategic planning.

One of the best things you can do is to bring in someone from a nonprofit in a different community in the region who is in the same industry such as housing or job training. Because you are not in their community, they will be willing to share their knowledge and insight. To secure their help, you will likely need to make a donation to their organization to compensate them for their time. In the nonprofit world, you will find there is a genuine desire to help each other so they may not ask for any compensation, but be prepared.

Formalizing the Recommendations

What will really bring the effort together is to put everyone's recommendation/plan in a document such as a business plan or report. This gives everyone a tangible item

to point to as the product of your effort. As a nonprofit, being able to hold the recommendations in their hand has more benefit than you think. It can be a big confidence boost to a struggling organization.

Implementation

Consulting and planning are great, but without implementation they are useless. You will need to see progress and the best way is to attend their board meetings or a separate regular meeting series with the staff to keep the recommended activity at the forefront.

Developing the Incentive

Nothing motivates like money, but giving funds to an organization without investing in the organization is very risky. One incentive to getting the organization to embrace the recommendations is to promise to either give them a direct donation of substantial amount if they reach some established goals or an investment in a future project they are working on and need the funds to make it feasible. Either way, by working with them first to better understand them, build their capacity, and then invest in them is a better approach than simply giving them funds.

3

Building Grassroots Partners

Functional neighborhood groups and block watches will ensure your success but they don't come about naturally.

To have an effective community response to social determinants of health, you need to have the community involved. Getting down to the street and household level with any message or request for action is extremely difficult for most organizations in most communities. Without this being possible, government agencies and nonprofits settle for the next best thing which is to work with visible people who have a reputation as being a community leader or activist. The problem then becomes determining how connected to the people is the person and are they capable of delivering everything you need from them. The answer is usually no.

What is needed is both capacity and two-way communication with your effort. This level of activity just simply cannot run through a handful of people unless they truly have a network of neighborhood leaders under them. Neighborhood residents need the ability to identify and take action on what needs to be done in their neighborhood. They will need to communicate with local government agencies and nonprofits what they need. The communication also needs to be from the top down. Those same partners will have messages and requests that need to be passed back to the neighbors. Clearly, there needs to be a structure introduced to allow this activity to occur.

Having one or more strong, organized neighborhood groups to work with in the city or region will be very advantageous; however, having this in a targeted area is crucial. Imagine this level of communication within a 40-block area where health numbers are low and high in needs with respect to social determinants. With two-way communication you would learn quickly what the people see as the issue, quick feedback on proposed solutions, and continual evaluation of your efforts allowing partners to make adjustments as needed.

The above sounds good from a service-based approach; however, this needs to be more than a provider-recipient relationship. The model will also deliver neighborhood residents working with their neighborhood leaders to not only identify issues, but to address them on their own. Clean-up projects, planting of gardens, and addressing problem houses can be done independently but will make the efforts of the partner organizations so much more successful.

The Model

The following is the basic model for organizing a target area:

1. Each 1-3 block area needs to have a trained block captain who holds meetings and acts as a conduit between the neighbors and a larger neighborhood organization.
2. One or more neighborhood organizations responsible for the targeted area with a core group of neighborhood leaders trained in how to conduct business. They are supported by the block captains in the neighborhood who rely on them to bring them together and formulate solutions to the problems their neighbors are identifying.
3. The neighborhood organization will develop a neighborhood plan that outlines what their neighborhood needs and how they will go about making their neighborhood better. These efforts will become committees under the neighborhood organization umbrella and match up to social determinants such as public safety, housing, economic development, and others.
4. The neighborhood would then send representatives to meet with their city council member or alderman to communicate their needs and activity. The best format is for the council member to hold a monthly meeting with neighborhood leaders from all over their district. This ties the neighborhood leaders to the existing structure of the city or county government.

How to be Successful

Every leader mentioned in the model will need to be proficient in their role, including how to run meetings, gather and present information, and what is expected of them. Delivering training is the most impactful way to be successful. As a targeted area experiences success, this training can be offered to additional targeted areas or city wide; however, supporting this activity in the targeted area needs to be the priority.



Building Grassroots Partnerships

Continued

There will be numerous ideas within the neighborhood that will require some level of funding. By providing small grants to the committees and organization, the neighbors will feel more optimistic about future change. These amounts may start at a couple hundred dollars on up to maybe five thousand. A wise course of action is to start out small and let the organization build a track record with the partnership before increase the amount of funding. For larger amounts, it may be a task that is better handled by one of the community's established nonprofits. For example, the neighborhood organization may want a house purchased and renovated. Instead of learning everything from scratch, they should invite a nonprofit to come in and rehab the house on their behalf.

Independence

There is one thing the partnership needs to always keep in mind is the neighborhood organization is an independent group and will value their ability to determine their own path. In theory, their path should align with the partnership; however, this will not always be the case. Once in motion, the partnership should always strive to maintain open dialog and a good relationship. Both the organization and the partnership should see the benefits of working together and need to give and take. The relationship should be transparent and beneficial to both sides.

Additional Information

Obviously, there is much more to making this work than what is contained in this chapter. Build Neighborhoods offers a very thorough manual for free on their website. Neighborhood Builder covers all the segments mentioned here and can be implemented with or without their assistance.

4

Recruit Volunteers

A large supply of skilled volunteers will help you accomplish so much more than money alone.

The number of paid staff available in any city to perform community development work is always limited. Each position requires funding for their position and support to allow them to engage any particular issue. Adding more paid staff will consume more financial resources and yet never be enough when one looks at all the needs across the community.

Many nonprofits will recruit volunteers to bolster their ranks allowing them to make a bigger impact. The nonprofit will recruit who they need, often unskilled volunteers required to operate an information table, sell tickets, or perform a neighborhood clean-up. With this approach, they are able to expand their capacity beyond what their budget will allow.

A Different View

If we take a reverse approach and ask ourselves what skills sets does the healthcare organization employees possess, we see a huge untapped potential. Not only can one look at job titles to understand what an employee can bring to the table, but if one looks into their past experiences and education the possibilities grow exponentially.

Here are some examples to think about:

- A staff accountant could help an organization improve their record keeping and generate useful reports.
- A nurse who teaches an exercise class outside of work could help create an exercise class for the community
- A communications staff member was once an art teacher in a high school and could help lead a community art project
- An IT department computer programmer could develop software to allow an organization to better track and manage their programs

There is a lot of untapped potential within your organization; however, there is more outside of your four walls. Think how true the above concept could be about the

employees of other large companies in the community. In addition to other large employers, local colleges and universities have even more volunteer resources in the form of students and professors. This expanded view of volunteer potential can make more activities possible than the traditional approach to volunteers. The big question is how to recruit, harness, and match these volunteers to the needs of the community.

Where to Start

Taking volunteers and forcing them into the community development arena would be a catastrophic mistake on too many fronts to mention. Instead, start with identifying the needs of the neighborhoods and overall community. This is done through surveys, townhall style meeting, and conversations. Although this takes time, it begins the relationship between your partnership and the people. They want to know you are hearing them before they truly engage you.

Through understanding what the community needs and wants, you will begin to understand what resources are needed. With this information, you start developing a shopping list of skills and knowledge. A volunteer sign-up program can then be used to capture volunteer interest as well as what experience and skills the people have.

It will be important that the database of volunteers is a two-way searchable system where volunteer needs can be posted for volunteers to search and for organizers to seek out skills and backgrounds they need for a particular activity. This will be a virtual marketplace for skills and volunteer opportunities that will at some point, be open to numerous organizations.

4

Recruit Volunteers

Continued

Here are some examples of skills that could be helpful:

Construction	Painting	Arts & Crafts	Science
Advertising	Marketing	Consulting	Meeting facilitation
Government	Fundraising	Writing	Journalism
Computers	Web design	Clinical	Event planning
Organizing	Team building	Accounting	Leadership

By having interested volunteers click the skills/knowledge they have in their profile, nonprofits can search for the volunteers they need. Opportunities can be posted and sorted by the same categories to allow volunteers to find situations where they can contribute.

Background Checks

Another feature you will need is a way a volunteer can request to have a background check completed and indicated on their profile. Your system may require a fee to cover the cost of this or you may underwrite it as a needed component. Not every volunteer needs to have a background check completed. It will be up to the nonprofit if they feel it is required. If the potential volunteer does not have a background check indicated, the nonprofit could request that they secure one before accepting the volunteer.

A Campaign

A large-scale effort like this doesn't just happen. Company-wide announcements of the need for volunteers will be required to make people aware. Volunteers will not simply get involved unless it sounds exciting and that their effort will make a difference. A healthcare marketing department could design an exciting message and launch a campaign designed to appeal to a broad range of employees. One should also realize the organization's employees may actually live in the areas you are targeting or know people who are. This is another motivation the campaign can target.

With proper coverage, both internally and externally, the effort will attract new participants while keeping current volunteers feeling good about their contributions. The key to maintaining the momentum lies in progress. The campaign needs to

continuously point out progress in either visible issues being addressed or sharing what progress is being made on measurements of health, education, economic, or other topics.

Evolution

In the beginning, it will appear to be a tedious process to match community needs to volunteer resources. Over time, the process can become streamlined. Nonprofits and neighborhood groups could be shown how to submit a proposal to the overall effort where a coordinator can review it and reach out to potential registered volunteers. A properly designed software solution could then notify the identified volunteer and share the request. The volunteer could then respond regarding their interest.

The design of the volunteer recruitment campaign should allow for it to spread to other companies and organizations throughout the community. The message should not focus on the hospital or clinic employees, rather anyone who wants to make a difference.



Focused Area

Limiting your focus to one reasonably-sized area will allow you to better understand the problems you are facing and the impact of your efforts.

From a healthcare perspective, there are health needs throughout their entire service area; however, every hospital or clinic can tell you where challenging areas are within those communities due to annual health scores required by the Federal government. These low-performing areas are also locations where social determinants of health also need to be addressed.

This manual makes an argument to focus on the macro (community level) vs the micro (patient level); however, trying to address social determinants on a regional or city-wide basis is not recommended. Your resources and those of the community will not be able to make an impact on such a large area. As you move away from the concentrated areas of both low health scores and negative social determinants of health, the need for your approach also diminishes. The better strategy is to focus your attention on a low-performing area and find successful approaches that can then be utilized in other challenged areas.

Tempting to be all things to all people

When you study these areas, you will see many different needs and will encounter a wide variety of views on what needs to be addressed. It will be tempting to address all the issues presented. Unfortunately, you will not be in a position to solve all the problems you see. What you can address will be determined by what resources you find, develop, or create. Anything new will require a significant effort, forcing you to choose what will be the most worthwhile or impactful. The best response to those asking you to address the many needs is to say you are here to work with the community to develop a plan to strengthen the neighborhood with what resources are available.

Some Things to Think About

In a reasonably sized community, any nonprofit has the resources to only address a small portion of any particular need. A housing development organization will often develop only 2-10 housing units per year unless they have secured a significant

source of funding. Even if they are producing 10-30 units per year, spread out over a city with a population of 80,000, you still will not see a dent in the affordable housing category. A food pantry in the same community may serve 50 families on a weekly basis, but the food insecurity needs of 80,000 people may require 400 families to be fed.

This is not meant to tell you the needs are staggering. Instead, you should see a concentration of both resources in a 500-house area may be more effective. Your target area may be even larger, but still the concept of focusing resources within this area will be more effective than trying to serve the entire community or region.

Getting Your Head Around the Concept

Trying to understand the needs and solutions of a large community is like trying to figure out how to deliver world peace. It doesn't take long before your brain hurts and you don't know where to even start. Using a focused area for your approach allows you to tour and visually see the area you are trying to improve. To find out more about the neighborhood, you can simply knock on a door, invite neighbors to a meeting, or strike up a conversation at a neighborhood event. This scale allows you to process what is present and what is needed much easier than thinking city wide.

As you speak to people about addressing boarded-up houses, potholes, or lighting, everyone can see the magnitude of the problem but also see how easy or difficult it will be to address these needs. Furthermore, when you solve a problem within a smaller area, everyone can see the difference immediately allowing you to build trust, belief, and momentum in your effort.

When engaging people in challenged areas, they will likely not be interested in how you plan to address the needs of the larger community. What they will want to know about is what you will be doing for their property, their street, and those immediately around them. Their view will be if you can't fix the lights on their street,



Focused Area

Continued

why should they think you can fix them throughout the city. The moral of the story is, use a focused approach to produce visible results.

From a health or social determinant perspective, a large area is hard to gather and maintain statistics. Once you take a look at what information there is available city-wide, you will find the data to be extremely limited and not gathered consistently. A smaller, focused area will allow you to monitor and measure your progress on both community development and health performance indicators.

When issues are identified in a target area, actions can be taken to gather needed information to better understand the extent of the need and to monitor progress. This could be a visual inventory, survey, or series of interviews to gather important data. It is also easier to see how one measurement can be influenced by another because people can see the relationship right in front of them vs across town.

Talking in Specifics

The difference between making a plan for a large community and a small targeted area is the planners need to talk in specifics about the smaller the area. A community-wide plan will make ambiguous statements like “this business district should be redeveloped to better meet the needs of the surrounding area.” No one really challenges the statement with regard to what does that really mean. For a targeted area, you are staring right at the property owners, the businesses that occupy them, and the neighbors who shop there. The people will need you to be more specific which is actually what you need to be doing anyway if you want to see visible change.

Conclusion

In summary, limiting your effort to a reasonable sized area will make you more effective in reaching your healthcare goals. Understanding and managing the smaller area will be much easier for both your organization and others. Funding, concentrated in the smaller area will have a bigger impact, which will be necessary to achieve desired health outcomes. The scale of your approach will stay at a level that is similar to the one-on-one level providers and hospitals feel is the most appropriate for addressing needs.



Data Driven

Communities lack the level of data hospitals are used to having at their fingertips. Gathering and analyzing new data will improve your chances for success.

If healthcare organizations are going to get actively involved in addressing social determinants, the topic of data will need to be addressed. Healthcare organizations are heavily dependent on the data they collect regarding their patients. In the distant past they had limited, raw data and rudimentary analysis tools. Today available patient data is overwhelming and their analytical tools are extraordinary. Their nonprofit community partners; however, are still stuck in the past using paper and pencil, spreadsheets, and program staff to understand their findings.

If healthcare wants to work with community groups, they will need to work with them to develop better data and analysis. Low performance in the data arena will make healthcare leadership hesitant to get involved. The best approach is to send all data to a central location that has the computing power to process the data as well as trained analyst to interpret what the data is indicating. With this information, all partners can better focus and improve their efforts to address the social determinants of health.

What is needed in the community is a data gathering tool designed for their needs that will store their information in a location shared by other groups. Community groups would then need to have access to reports of their data and information from other community groups. Those who gather PHI would need some special protective design considerations, but this is very simple to do within a system. This would be the first step in getting better information to community organizations.

The more complex situation is with the healthcare organizations. They need to keep their PHI behind the firewall of their organization, only letting deidentified information to pass outside to the community. The answer is to only expect general statements about the needs of a neighborhood or community to come from this activity. This will work out fine with the community as they are not as focused on health as hospitals and clinics are.

The information from the community would be stored in one location and then sent to the healthcare organization through a secure method to meet IT security standards. Once inside the firewall, the information from the community

organizations can be combined with detailed health information that will provide better analysis of social determinants and the health of the population.

Geographic Information Systems

The best tool for this is to use a geographic information system (GIS). With a GIS system and the right base maps, information can be linked to a specific address, census block group or tract, or zip code. Once attached to a map, the software can then provide analytical tools to help the users interpret the relationship and show it graphically on a map using different shadings or colors. The results of this analysis could help healthcare organizations to design better responses to the social determinants of a target area, neighborhood, or community.

For example, the hospital may see that the target area has 50 different patients with visits to the ED for out-of-control diabetes within one census block group. They can then understand if the patients have primary care providers and if they are going for regular checkups. All of this stays behind the firewall so no PHI is shared with the community. What is shared with partner organizations is that uncontrolled diabetes is a major issue for the population of the overall target area. When designing a response of outreach workers, the hospital will direct them to focus on the particular block group.

In addition to this activity, the healthcare organization can also look at what the community information for that area is conveying. There could be employment, crime, education, and other social determinant data available for the block group or the census tract. The analyst may draw conclusion by looking at this additional data and make the argument that there is a need to increase employment or reduce crime as a way to better improve the diabetes outcomes for the same area.

This is a simplified example, but it shows how data and analysis can be compartmentalized to protect PHI while allowing for unprecedented analysis and targeted response. The benefits to the community partners who now can have access to more data and useful reports could be a huge win for the community as a whole.



Data Driven

Continued

Types of data

Below are just a few examples of what is possible regarding community information that may be available:

- Land use – zoning, type of structure,
- Property maintenance – number of code violations
- Crime statistics – number of 911 calls, violent crimes, etc.
- Housing costs, foreclosures, average house prices
- Social program participation, referrals made/received

Additional Information

The effort to better understand the community should not stop with what data is available. There are ways to gather additional information in the field through observations, interviews, and surveys. When done correctly, these new sources of data can be merged with existing to further enhance the effort's understanding of neighborhoods and community.

New information gathered in the field by request of the partnership could include information such as houses that need maintenance, active block watches and neighborhood group boundaries, information supporting or disproving identified issues, surveys about resident's view on issues, and more.

Researchers

For hospitals that have a research component, either an internal department or a relationship with a university, this assembly of data and tools could be very attractive to researchers. Typically, community groups are not very fond of talking to researchers; however, all may benefit if researchers contribute new data and share their findings upon completion. The researchers will need to have agreements with or be employed by the hospital to have access and meet the PHI requirements regarding anything they share outside of the organization.

Common ID Number

In the healthcare world, we use a Medical Record Number (MRN) to tie a patient's data together from different visits, test results, and orders. If we want outside

agencies to be able to bring together information on individuals, they will need a common identifier they all use when entering data. They should use a newly generated number and refer to it as a community record number (CRN). Developing a simple application where a user can enter a name and address to see if a number has been assigned and if not then ask the system to assign a new number could be an invaluable tool to bringing data together from various organizations.

Organizations could then collect information on people they serve, verify if they followed through with referrals to other organizations, and develop reports for their organization. Without this, there will be no way to join information coming from other organizations. For healthcare, these CRNs could be matched to MRNs, allowing medical data and community information to merge behind the hospital's firewall.

It will be interesting to see if a resident who was referred to one or more agencies actually followed through. Even more intriguing would be to see if this led to an improvement of a personal health statistic such as blood pressure or visits to the ED.



Every Resource

Leave no stone unturned and bring as many resources as you can find to bear down on the targeted area.

To be honest, single solutions don't work very well when trying to turn around or improve an area. Too often an organization or government agency identifies a need for a neighborhood and focuses on it until it comes into existence. As we look at social determinants, we can see how intertwined they are and logically, the solutions will need to be equally intertwined. A new apartment building or new street are both nice additions, but do not begin to speak to the social and health needs identified in the social determinants.

If you have not had the pleasure of delivering either of these two examples, you should know it takes a lot of hard work and time to make them happen. Those organizations may not be able to deliver anything else during these projects due to available resources such as staffing or funding. What is needed are other projects or services designed to complement these significant investments.

Other organizations need to know about these projects and given a chance to offer their programs or activity to the same area. This coordination can be best handled through the production of a neighborhood plan, consisting of a neighborhood study and a plan demonstrating what the neighbors want for their community. Nonprofits and government agencies can then review the materials and identify where they can fit into the solution; however, it is important for everyone to keep their activities connected to the neighborhood plan to avoid delivering solutions the neighborhood doesn't want or agree with.

No Resource Too Small

There are many efforts that seem incapable of having an impact. A simple after school reading club or a progressive dinner between neighbors on a street will likely not change the status quo by themselves. When they occur in conjunction with many other activities, they can be a difference maker.

When evaluating existing resources and efforts, avoid dismissing them either due to size or because you are not interested in the topic. Simply include them in your list of assets until you can find a way to connect them. Invite them to sit in planning

meetings and share their offerings with your audience as a way to see if they can play a role in your effort. An afterschool reading club times ten is nothing to turn up your nose to and an entire neighborhood participating in progressive dinners on their street starts to sound like create engagement.

Don't Eliminate, Gather Instead

Beyond scale of solution, be wary of leaving resources out for other reasons. Difficult personalities of leadership, past failures, perceived differences can all be used to not invite a resource to the table. I can tell you with certainty that neighborhood and community development will be messy. Don't let that be an excuse to not bring every resource possible to bear on your targeted area. Mend fences, forgive past transgressions, open dialog, and swallow pride on your way to achieving your goals.

Bring Resources Together

Although there might be numerous nonprofits in any community, most likely they are alone in their specific field of services they provide. For example, there may be only one nonprofit housing provider or one community-based nutrition organization. This leads to the feeling of their organization against the world. Even if there are multiple organizations operating in the same topic, they may see themselves as competing for the same resources and avoid forming beneficial relationships. Giving them a chance to work with other nonprofits on a shared goal can breathe new life into their staff who may enjoy the camaraderie.

Synergy

There is a benefit beyond simply stacking responses to a neighborhood plan. A planning process could occur with no interaction between the resource organizations, which would lead to an inferior plan. It is when many different resources are in the same room pouring over neighborhood maps, data, survey



Every Resource

Continued

results, and possible responses when the magic happens. If you add in motivated and capable neighborhood leaders, the conversations take an even more powerful turn. In these setting, everyone has a tendency to stretch their mind and their commitments when they find themselves part of something special.

Increased Participation

When neighborhood residents hear there are some new houses being built in their neighborhood they are mildly surprised and interested as they wonder if things are starting to change in their neighborhood. When you add in news of a street being rebuilt, a neighborhood walk program starting up, and a yard light program being offered in the area, they are more inclined to thing the neighborhood is really starting to change.

The increased interest can lead to increased participation by the residents in all of the programs being offered. This level of activity actually fuels organizations to offer more as they are getting positive feedback from the community. When newspaper articles and tv news programs cover the activities and accomplishments, potential sponsors or contributors will come forward wanting to know how they can get involved.

Conclusion

Bring every resource to bear on the problems of a neighborhood. Use whatever resources are available to build up assets. Find a role for resources in your community, don't eliminate them. It can get messy, but you need to gain momentum with the people and nothing does this better than people seeing a lot of positive things moving in one direction.



Leadership Role

Hospitals need to demonstrate leadership in the effort. Sending money will not get you where you want to go. You have to be involved in the governance of the project.

Although this approach is new to most healthcare organization, it is important for the healthcare organization to play a lead role in the effort from the very beginning. They will have the most to gain if done properly and will have contributed a considerable amount of funding and volunteers if the ideas are executed properly.

Don't Just Send Money

On the surface it appears that all the healthcare organization needs to do is simply send money. As mentioned before, this will only lead to a disaster. The number of people and organizations lining up to take your money will be numerous, but without following a plan of building relationships, track records, and selectively choosing which projects to fund the effort, all will be for not.

Steering Committee

The steering committee of this effort should consist of representatives of the hospital, city/county government, nonprofits, and other large organizations who are going to be heavily involved. This group will ultimately be the governance committee so deciding who will be a member will be important.

Develop Guidelines for Roles and Activity

The committee will need to develop guardrails about how the committee will operate, what their shared vision will be, and document their intentions. Defining what is expected from a member of the committee and what roles they will play will be important to managing the process while providing transparency to participating entities.

Make Funding Decisions for Strengthening Nonprofits and Neighborhood Organizations

The review of nonprofits needs will create a list of ways the committee can increase their capacity. Some of the ideas will require funds so decisions will need to be

made. Ideally, organizations who are providing money will provide funds each year based upon a projected budget. Once funded, the committee will make decisions on how it is spent.

Recruit Others

The number of members in the beginning may be few; however, the committee members should actively recruit other contributors to join the effort and possibly the committee. Local universities and large employers would be great additions to the effort.

Volunteer Network

Launch a sophisticated volunteer solution to match employees with needs in the target area/community. This could be a readily available platform or one created by local IT professionals, but could expand to cover any company that is participating.

Spending/Hiring Review

Large employers such as the hospital should review how they currently spend money to determine if there is a way to spend the money with local businesses. Shifting purchases from a far off vendor to one close at home could have a positive impact to the effort. Reviewing the hiring process and needs could lead to identifying ways to find employees in the targeted areas the committee is focused on.

Summary

With all this important activity, it is hard to imagine a healthcare organization not taking an active role. Hiring a VP or director to directly lead this effort would be a wise choice given the amount of work involved.



Major Investments

Major investments need to be identified and supported through the planning process. Once determined, the level of funding a hospital can provide will make positive change possible.

After making small to mid-sized investments in the target area, the third stage of investments comes with much larger price tags. There may be a multitude of ideas in the beginning of what should be invested in; however, by the third stage of activity, the coalition will have a much better idea of what is needed. Constant feedback from the neighborhood residents and the subject matter experts should help direct the decision.

Development Projects

When it comes to big investments, leveraging funds is very important. Typically, a bank or finance institution will be able to fund the first part of the total price tag, but never the whole amount. The difference between what the bank will finance and the total price tag is called the gap. Often the City will have a loan pool and will be want to take second position on the financing. If there still remains a gap in the financing, the next line of financing will likely need to be a grant. What determines this is if the project is projected to produce enough revenue to pay back all the investment partners, both in financial returns or in the case of failure and liquidation. Often, the income stream will only retire the first and maybe second position. Furthermore, the third position will most likely not recover any of their investment in the case of failure, making anything after the second position likely to be a grant.

The coalition needs to find out where their money can have the most impact. Although taking a third position on financing a loan will look like a grant, the amount of the remaining gap may not be that big so it could make sense. What the coalition should not do is use their money when there is another party willing to make the investment, because the flexibility of the coalition's funds may be useful on another project where traditional investors will not commit their money.

There could be opportunities to actually invest large sums of money with a strong possibility to see a return on the investment. Hospitals and other anchor institutions may have additional funds they could bring to the table if they felt it was more of an investment and not a grant. For example, a new multi-family building complex would normally attract bank financing; however, they won't make the commitment

on a particular project. The hospital could use funds that it normally invests in the market and redirect it to the project. This could bring about a previously unworkable project and deliver a much-needed boost to the target area.

Programs

There could also be opportunities to fund a program. The most difficult aspect of program funding is the length of time a source is willing to commit to. Typically, foundations and government funding will use a window of one to three years of funding to launch a new program. The thought is after this start-up period, the nonprofit will find another source. This is not what happens.

Nonprofits play a game of running with a program for the initial time period and then either try to propose a new program that accomplishes the same goal or move on to a different activity. If you are considering funding a program, you should think through how long the program is going to be needed. If you believe it will take five years to accomplish your goals, then set funding expectations from the start. Another approach is to scale back funding over time, allowing for an expensive launch followed by a smaller ongoing effort. The smaller amount may be easier to digest if not too significant.

Loan Pools

For economic development, housing, and nonprofit operations, getting small, short term financing can be difficult. Creating a loan pool to allow nonprofits to access funds for 1-5 years with a low interest rate could be extremely useful. The funds would be at risk; however, there would still be a high likelihood that loans would be repaid.



Major Investments

Continued

Examples of use:

Housing

- Land assembly for a known project may require flexible funds that can be accessed quickly.

Economic Development

- Micro loans to small businesses to purchase equipment that will immediately pay off in sales/employment
- Small business loans that are under \$10,000 or \$5,000

Nonprofit Operations

- Micro loans for equipment or items needed in emergency situations

Attracting Funding for the Loan Pool

Once a decision is made to develop such a loan pool, other institutions should be approached to contribute additional funds. Once an amount of say \$50,000 is established, every additional \$5,000 or larger contribution will be impactful.

Conclusion

Most of the activity of this approach is intended to lead up to these larger investments. Making these contributions to a neighborhood could turn the tide and deliver a healthy neighborhood that is no longer suffering from poor performance. Major investments can make the funders very nervous with the big dollar amounts but by using this process, they can make better, informed decisions than simply responding to a funding request.



Must Be A Multi-Faceted Response

Single solutions or responses will not be successful in a complex environment. This is what most people get wrong about addressing social determinants.

In conducting research on addressing social determinants of health, one can find a wide variety of efforts made by institutions who are attempting to make a difference. There are headlines about healthcare organizations making large investments into creating affordable housing, focusing on creating local jobs through training or reallocating their spending, and other wise investments in the community. What is not found is a multi-faceted approach focused on all the main topics of social determinants.

Just investing in one will have a positive impact on the community; however, if you are looking for changes in community health scores, you won't see any uptick. The reason is housing is only one of the issues the population may be suffering from. Very few are being affected by only one determinant. The people who come to live in the new housing will be affected by the education levels of the neighborhood, lack of connection with their neighbors, and dismal prospects of finding a livable wage.

Below are the main topics social determinants fall into and how you may want to look at them:

Housing

We often hear the term "affordable housing" which is actually an abbreviation for "safe, livable, affordable housing". Over time, the community activist and politicians started using this term as it found unilateral support. The truth is most communities already have affordable housing, it just doesn't meet all the intended criteria like safe and livable. When a nonprofit creates affordable housing, it checks all the boxes and gives the new occupant a stable place to live.

Without addressing other needs in a neighborhood, simply building new affordable housing will not be enough. In the end we want success of the people as well as a shining new building.

Connecting the Dots

The new affordable housing needs to be near major employers or on bus lines that can get them to good paying jobs. There should also be a good offering of businesses in the area offering food, products, and services people have come to expect for a livable neighborhood.

The neighborhood schools need to be well prepared to educate the children of the new affordable housing. Underperforming schools can keep generations of neighborhood residents in poverty, which is a disturbing trend. Tutoring programs, investments in technology, well paid teachers, and other resources combined with attractive housing and job opportunities is starting to sound a lot better.

Economic Development

Efforts can be made to introduce job or skill training for a community's unemployed or underemployed population. Investments in business start-ups or expansions of existing employers will create new jobs for the same population. One of the big challenges to these efforts is the basic education levels in the neighborhoods targeted by these approaches. It is harder to train people the lower their education outcomes from their grade school or high school experience.

The crime rate and feeling of a safe community will impact whether companies locate or expand in any neighborhood. If we want these jobs closer to the people who need the jobs, the neighborhood needs to be first safe and then desirable. These two attributes are not directly related to home values, so this doesn't mean you have to attract high-end subdivisions to achieve them.

Without addressing the underlying factors that affect economic development, great sounding proposals will either never launch or meet with failure.

Community Building

Bringing people together to make their neighborhoods is a very needed activity. Forming block watches and neighborhood organizations is a great way to do this. Preventing crime can be done successfully with this approach; however, it won't take long to see the drivers of criminal activity. Low performing schools followed by a less than glowing career outlooks leads first to deviant behavior followed by serious criminal offences.

Poor housing creates a place where people don't want to live which leads to high turnover in both apartments and houses. With high turnover, people don't bother to know their neighbors. These negative forces tear apart the fabric of the neighborhood, making it difficult to realize progress in building the social capital.

If you want a strong neighborhood with a sense of community, factors like education, jobs, and safety need to be addressed.

Education

Good schools are desired by just about everyone. Many people see that a good education is important to generations having a proper start in life. Investing in facilities, teachers, and equipment is the foundation of a good school. Adding in academic opportunities such as tutoring, mentoring, and club activities can help students achieve more. If the neighborhood around the school is high in crime or the families of the students live in poor housing conditions, success can be fleeting.

The environment needs to be considered when looking for increased academic performance of both the school and the individual students. Participation in gangs, no vision of a positive future after school, and run-down neighborhoods creates a poor education environment.

Asking children to overcome these obstacles and focus on their studies is too challenging for many. Yes, some do manage to rise above, but too many are hindered by these factors leading to unsatisfactory outcomes.

Injecting Health in Everything

All of these efforts would impact the social determinants of health, but what about the topic of healthcare itself? Every effort should be made to tie available healthcare opportunities to any of the topics. One of the biggest needs of healthcare is awareness and engagement of the people. Sharing information, staging health events in conjunction with other activities, and engaging health outreach workers can really add to the impact of addressing social determinants of health.



Ideas and Concepts for Implementation

There are many activities that can be implemented to change the course of a neighborhood. Not every solution works in every neighborhood.

The following are ideas and concepts for you to consider for improving social determinants in a target area. They can be reviewed by residents and planners for inclusion in the neighborhood plan or they can be simply adopted for use by one of the community partners. In most cases, they will require some level of funding which could come from the funds contributed or raised by the coalition.

- Crime Prevention
- Building Social Capital
- Neighborhood Management
- Economic Development
- Housing Improvement
- Food Insecurities

Block Captain Training

Crime Prevention | Building Social Capital | Neighborhood Management

Host a series of neighborhood leadership training starting with block captain training. Build Neighborhoods offers a free downloadable pdf of training materials in the form of Neighborhood Builder. Using these materials, organize a series of training sessions to build up the communities ability to make their neighborhood safe. For a fee, BuildNeighborhoods can come to your community and provide the training sessions.

Neighborhood Organization Training

Building Social Capital | Neighborhood Management

To build the capacity of the neighborhood groups in the targeted area and beyond, offering neighborhood organization training can increase the resident's capacity to engage the entities who are working with them to improve their neighborhood. BuildNeighborhoods offers free materials for you to use for training and for a fee can offer onsite training sessions.

Model Streets

Neighborhood Management | Building Social Management

The neighborhood will develop a model streets document that the block captains will work to achieve. It will include expectations in property and yard maintenance, social connection, and infrastructure.

Yard Light Program

Crime Prevention

Develop a program with the local utility company to install a yard light on a pole in yards to illuminate the property at night as a way to discourage criminal behavior. A yard light is approximately five feet tall and is bright, but not enough to be a



Ideas and Concepts for Implementation

nuisance to the homeowner or adjacent properties. This would require grant money and may be structured so there is a small cost to the homeowner.

Retail Business Workshop

Economic Development

Using an existing commercial space, instructors from the local college or university could offer workshops to improve retail entrepreneurs' chances to succeed. The workshops will focus on inventory management, presentation of products, advertising, bookkeeping, and management of employees.

Below are two examples of this concept, one in Detroit, MI and one in Concord, NC.

TechTown

Detroit, MI

TechTown's Retail Boot Camp is an intensive, hands-on, 12-week program that prepares serious entrepreneurs for the opening of their brick-and-mortar establishments

TechTown's program offers the following:

- Developing quality retail operations and routines
- Designing impactful visual merchandising
- Selling through virtual and in-person customer service
- Selecting point-of-sale and e-commerce system
- Understanding your pricing and inventory mix
- Identifying startup costs and funding sources
- Selecting a permanent location based on market data
- Navigating brick-and-mortar regulations with legal guidance
- Utilizing an architect for the design-build process
- Developing crisis and store management practices

Cabarrus Center

The Boot Camp portion of the Retail Lab program consists of an application-based, 6-week immersive boot camp, followed by an opportunity for new retailers to test their concept in the Cabarrus Center's downtown Concord retail space for 6 months.

Curriculum topics include: Business Basics, Strategy, Branding and Marketing, E-commerce, Point-of-Sale and Inventory, and Real Estate/Licensing.

Create a Healthy Eating Grocery Store

Food Insecurities | Economic Development

With many low performing areas, food insecurities may be a result of lack of food outlets, particularly fresh vegetables. Consider starting a grocery store focused on healthy eating.

Options

- Work with an existing nonprofit who is trying or interested in taking on food insecurities in this manner.
- Find someone who wants to start a grocery business and provide them the financial support to open their own store.

Connect to Health

- Include a kitchen/cooking area for demonstrations of healthy cooking
- Develop coupon program for nonprofits to hand out at their activities that can be exchanged at the store for healthy food.
- Offer delivery services to seniors in the immediate area

Extreme Homes

Housing Improvement

After the successful run of the tv show "Extreme Make Over Home Edition", the interest in houses being renovated soared. The show took ordinary houses and made over the top renovations to wow their audience. For neighborhoods with



Ideas and Concepts for Implementation

outdated housing, this approach could hold the answer in getting people to invest in their homes.

Demonstration Houses

In addition to simply building affordable houses in the neighborhood you are focused on, create an over the top remodel that could spark ideas and demonstrate how houses could look. This could lead to homeowners in the area being inspired to invest instead of moving out. There are many people who are unable to picture how their home could look after a significant renovation.

The Improvements

The improvements need to have a real “Wow” factor, without being so over the top they don’t make sense. Using granite or quartz countertops, higher grades of flooring, opening up the floorplan, and other upscale renovations can really demonstrate the possibilities.

How it Could Work

Once a good candidate property is acquired, develop a renovation design that achieves the level of impact you wish to make. Use conventional financing to acquire the home and what improvements can be included. Solicit sponsorship and contributions from renovation companies in the form of services, materials, or funding. Home improvement stores and supply houses may also want to be a part of these projects. Upon completion, run several months of open houses on weekends and some week nights. Pass out flyers in the neighborhood to encourage residents to take tours of the house to get ideas for their own home.

After the tours wind down, put the house on the market or tie it to another program such as ones that encourage city employees to buy a house in challenged neighborhoods. If sponsorships were successful, the sale price of the house can simply recoup the actual debt of the project.

Income Required

It is incorrect to assume everyone living in an economically challenged area is poor. Often, one or more members of a household has secured a higher income, but has remained in the neighborhood. These type of renovations will require a higher income than the most houses, but could breathe life into neighborhood. Not everything that is done in a neighborhood needs to be focused on helping the poorest of the population.

Impact

When you are renovating housing in distressed areas, you are hoping to influence others to renovate or build new houses. New or renovated houses are positive additions to the neighborhood, but you need a mechanism to draw more private investment. Households with higher income have access to other forms of financing that are not reliant on appraisals of the home.

For some neighborhoods, this could lead to or expand gentrification. Although increasing people’s investment in their homes can be a win, if increases get out of control, you will dislocate the very population you are trying to help. If the area appears to be at risk of gentrification, steps should be taken to preserve the affordability of the neighborhood. In this case, using this approach may not be appropriate.

Neighborhood Walk

Health/Exercise | Crime Prevention

Once several block watches are formed in a neighborhood, organize a Neighborhood Walk activity where neighbors gather in a group and simply walk through their neighborhood as a form of exercise and a way to notice what is going on their neighborhood. This activity would make the other neighbors feel safer and encourage other outdoor activity. This can be done once a week or more often if there is interest.



Ideas and Concepts for Implementation

Getting it Started

With just a few participants, a neighborhood walk can be scheduled to occur on one week night such as Tuesday evening. With a little sponsorship money, T-shirts can be made available either for free or a nominal fee. The participants would show up wearing their t-shirts. They would then take walk through the neighborhood, waving at people they encounter and making note of what they see.

At the end of the walk, a quick conversation would allow them to discuss their observations. The organizer could take some simple notes and keep a record to share at the next neighborhood meeting. Passing out flyers in the neighborhood can attract more participants. As the group gets larger, multiple groups can be started with different meeting points.

Tutoring Program

Education

Work with the school district to create a corporate sponsored tutoring program for grades schools. Ask the company to allow employees who are interested to take one hour a week while being paid. Schools would have to do background checks on any volunteers. Companies would find value in their employees helping raising the performance of the students who would see improvement in their academic performance.

Ideas in Need of Development

- Painting Event
- Landscaping Day
- Dumpster Day
- Neighborhood Picnic
- Health Survey

- Small business Fair
- How to start a business
- Neighborhood tech center
- Individual development accounts to reward people for doing what the partnership wants such as attending job training, nutrition goals, and others.
- Lease purchase program to convert renters to home owners
- Create Home repair fund. A revolving loan program for home repairs under a certain ceiling (\$5,000 or \$10,000)
- Home maintenance classes or workshops. Partner with stores like Home Depot but offered in the neighborhood.
- Reward program/encouragement to make houses more energy efficient. Utility companies.
- Connect community college certificate programs with large employers who will require certificates for new hires in certain fields.