

February 2021

The Improving the Social Determinants of Health Act

ACTION

The National Association of School Nurses (NASN) urges Congress to pass The Improving the Social Determinants of Health Act that would authorize the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to 1) Improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities by coordinating CDC Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) activities and 2) Improve capacity of public health agencies and community organizations to address SDOHs. The Improving the Social Determinants of Health Act was introduced by Representative Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-CA), HR 379, as well as U.S. Senators Tina Smith (D-MN) and Chris Murphy (D-CT).

HISTORY

- Factors such as housing, employment, food security, and education have a major influence on individual and community health – these are called the Social Determinants of Health.
- Medical care is not the only factor in a person's health and in fact, the SDOH may have an even larger impact on one's health. Inequities often exacerbate health condition – this legislation will study those Social Determinants of Health.
- In 2018, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) Alex Azar highlighted the necessity of addressing social determinants of health in HHS's work, including at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS).

BACKGROUND

The Improving the Social Determinants of Health Act would:

- Coordinate across CDC to ensure programs consider and incorporate SDOH in grants and activities.
- Coordinate, support, and align SDOH activities at CDC with other federal agencies, such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and others.
- Collect and analyze data related to SDOH activities.
- Authorize \$50 million annually for program activities.
- Award grants to state, local, territorial, and Tribal health agencies and organizations to address SDOHs in target communities.
- Award grants to nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education to conduct research on SDOH best practices; provide technical assistance, training and evaluation assistance to target community grantees; and disseminate best practices.