

UNTAPPED

AREAS OF
OPPORTUNITY
FOR EMPLOYERS

**SOCIAL DETERMINANTS
AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT**



UNTAPPED

AREAS OF
OPPORTUNITY
FOR EMPLOYERS

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS AFFECTING EMPLOYMENT

Over the past decade, health experts recognized that only 10-20% of a person's health is determined by what happens in the hospital or doctor's office. This leaves 80-90% to other variables, most of which are based on a person's social circumstance.

Despite decades of employer investment in physical and financial wellness benefits for employees, costs for these programs continue to rise without clear evidence employees are getting healthier or saving more for their future. Costs for programs like these have been on the rise since the 1960s and are projected to continue unless employers embrace a dramatic change in approach.

Employers have an opportunity to shift from a reactionary cost containment to a proactive approach by looking at cost drivers typically ignored in the work force: social determinants of health (SDoH).



SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH: DEFINITION AND POPULATION FOCUS

There is a longstanding recognition that social factors play an important role in a person's health and well-being with publications dating back to the 1800s.

However, it wasn't until 2005 that the World Health Organization (WHO) created the Commission on Social Determinants of Health to support countries addressing social factors leading to ill health and health inequities.

The commission defined social determinants of health (SDoH) as:

“The conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life. These forces and systems include economic policies and systems, development agendas, social norms, social policies and political systems.”¹

The World Health Organization

Employers who consider SDoH when designing benefits programs that address a diverse population's health needs can comprehensively and effectively address the value of their workforces' human capital, including knowledge, skills, abilities, motivation, and creativity.²



Consideration of health impact tied to where a person lives, works, plays and grows old will continue to be a key area of focus in healthcare disruption over the next few years.³ Much attention has been focused on healthcare providers and hospital systems identifying and tracking social barriers affecting health outcomes. This approach has limitations in effectiveness. To truly have impact, it will take a broader team approach to improve the health and wellbeing of communities, lower health care costs and improve health outcomes - and the employer has an opportunity to take a central role.

THE VALUE OF INVESTING IN YOUR EMPLOYEES

“Productivity isn’t everything, but in the long run it is almost everything, A country’s ability to improve its standard of living over time depends almost entirely on its ability to raise output per worker.”¹⁰

Paul Krugman

This cycle between productivity and people suggests higher levels of productivity allow society to reinvest in human capital and smart investments result in higher labor productivity. Unfortunately, productivity in most developed economies has been anemic and wages haven’t grown as much as expected. All of this raises a chicken-or-egg question: Are we suffering from low productivity because we have underinvested in human capital? Or are we unable to invest in human capital because structural factors are permanently reducing productivity?¹¹ The evidence suggests the former: We could improve our productivity if we invest in human capital-by increased wages and investments in the social needs and support of our employees. Creating inspiring jobs and engaging working environments requires holistically addressing the factors that drive employee inspiration, which is outlined in Bain & Company’s pyramid of employee needs below.

THE PYRAMID OF EMPLOYEE NEEDS¹²

INSPIRED EMPLOYEES...

Get meaning and inspiration from their company’s mission	Are inspired by the leaders in their company
--	--

ENGAGED EMPLOYEES...

Are part of an extraordinary team	Have autonomy to do their jobs	Learn and grow every day	Make a difference and have an impact
-----------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------------------

SATISFIED EMPLOYEES...

Have a safe work environment	Have the tools, training, and resources to do their jobs well	Can get their jobs done efficiently, without excess bureaucracy	Are valued and rewarded fairly
------------------------------	---	---	--------------------------------

SOURCE BAIN & COMPANY

© HBR.ORG

THE VALUE OF INVESTING IN YOUR EMPLOYEES




What can employers do to affect changes in employee health, wellbeing, productivity and outcomes?

“Nationally, there's awareness that we need to tackle social determinants of health, but the best strategy to do that has not been uniformly identified. It's not always clear whether the best thing to do is tackle food insecurity, whether you tackle housing, whether you tackle transportation, or whether you look at issues around education and job security.”¹³ The most important action an employer can take is recognizing their role in building healthier communities and finding partners to affect lasting change.



Health Action Council has identified some best practices that are being implemented.

-  **ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY**
-  **CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
-  **PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO INCREASE ACCESS**

BEST PRACTICES TO AFFECT CHANGES IN EMPLOYEE HEALTH, WELLBEING, PRODUCTIVITY AND OUTCOMES



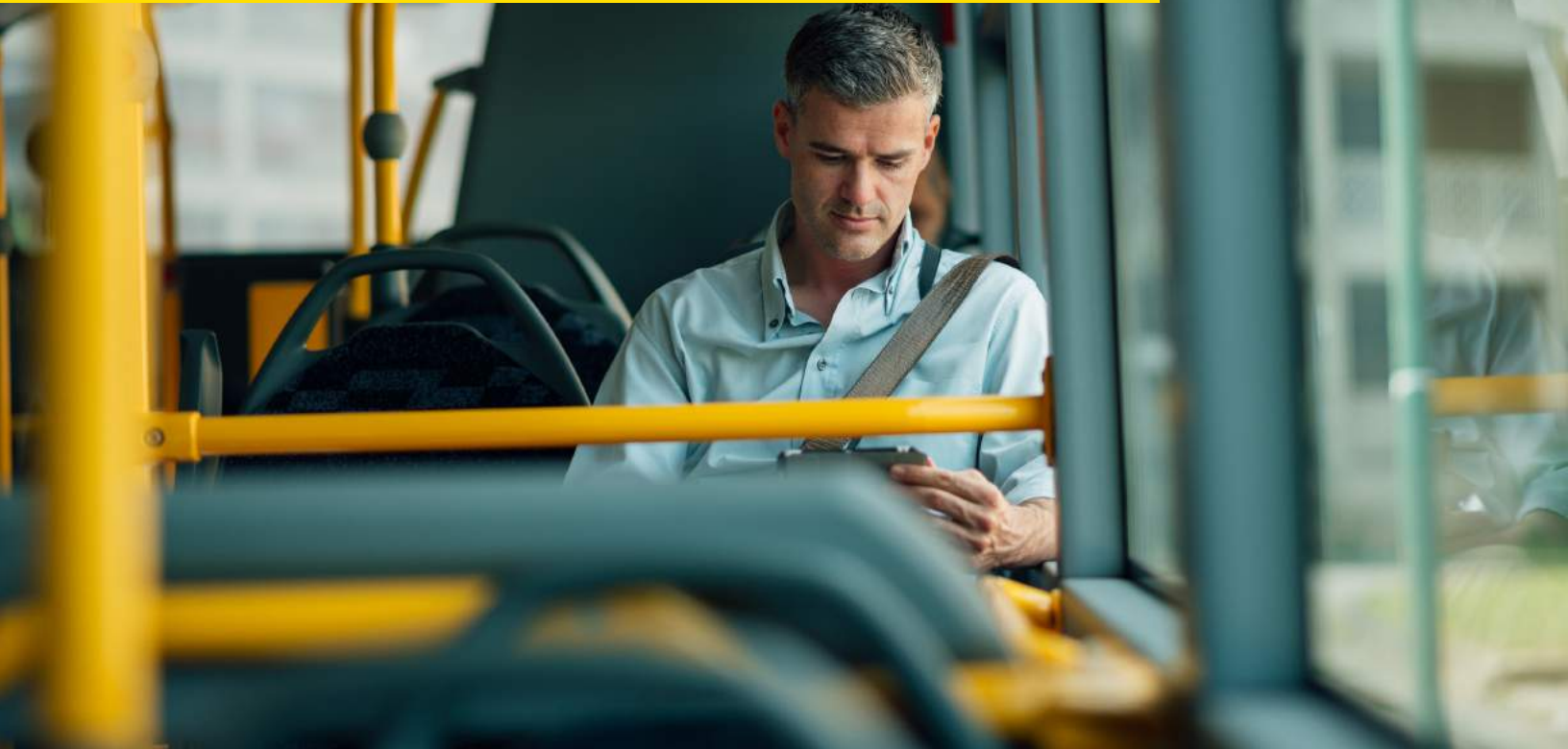
➔ CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Kaiser Permanente created affordable housing options for patients in the Bay Area. Kaiser engaged regional partners, including Enterprise Community Partners (Enterprise) and East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) to create sustainable and affordable housing options for underserved individuals in the Bay Area. Homelessness is a dangerous health condition, not only a social condition, because of the extreme conditions of living on the street, especially for those suffering with chronic health conditions. Kaiser Permanente and Enterprise invested in a 41-unit housing complex to keep it affordable. EBALDC is managing the building and making necessary updates. Additionally, Kaiser and Enterprise each promised matching \$50 million in donations to create a national loan fund for affordable housing in Kaiser's care areas, including eight states and Washington DC.

Across the country, school districts and universities are offering housing assistance programs. Many are entering into community-based collaborations of government, schools, charities and financial institutions to build affordable housing options, make partial rent payments or provide housing stipends.

Some employers are buying or building affordable housing units to be offered to their employees and the community at large.

BEST PRACTICES TO AFFECT CHANGES IN EMPLOYEE HEALTH, WELLBEING, PRODUCTIVITY AND OUTCOMES



➔ PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION TO INCREASE ACCESS

Payers and providers alike are partnering with rideshare companies and non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) providers to connect patients with their providers. These ride providers are also working to make a more workable healthcare interface themselves.

Blue Cross Blue Shield Association used zip code data to identify patients living in transportation deserts. They partner with Lyft. “The work we’re doing with BCBSA is critical to our goal of reducing the transportation health care gap by 50 percent in the next two years—and a key part of our mission to improve people’s lives with the world’s best transportation.”¹⁴

And although it has not publicly released such information, similar trends have likely emerged with rideshare competitor Uber, which has its own healthcare offshoot, Uber Health.

Employers across the country are investing in shuttles, public transportation passes, and transportation reimbursements to remove the stress of how to get to work.

FOUR STEPS TO BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES AND EMPLOYEES

1 IDENTIFY EMPLOYEE NEEDS

Ask questions and collect data on what your employees need. Using social determinant of health assessment tools to screen and identify the needs of your employees will offer you insight on where to start.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH ASSESSMENT TOOLS

Many of the sites participating in *Transforming Complex Care* adapted existing or created new assessment tools to better capture patients' social needs and barriers to care. Examples of these screening tools are available to download below:¹⁵

- **[Social Determinants Screening Tool \(AccessHealth Spartanburg\)](#)**
- **[Self-Sufficiency Outcomes Matrix \(OneCare Vermont\)](#)**
- **[PRAPARE Tool \(Redwood Community Health Coalition\)](#)**
- **[Community Paramedicine Pilot Health Assessment \(ThedaCare\)](#)**
- **[Social Needs Assessment \(Virginia Commonwealth University Health System\)](#)**

2 IDENTIFY PARTNERS

Once you have data about employee key needs and gaps in the communities where these employees live and work, employers can bring in key strategic partners to address the gaps.

Improving individual and population health requires partnerships to engage other sectors (e.g., education, justice and employment) in creating healthier environments. Successful community partnerships have resulted in:

- Low-cost daycare and early childhood education opportunities
- Work-site farmers markets
- Mentor programs for high school students and internships for college students
- Healthy food options at the worksite

SUMMARY

LET'S KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

healthactioncouncil.org | 216.328.2200

#DOHWRQ&RQFLOSOBKWEIFVHUYHG