IN THE NEWS

Government Seeking Inclusion of 'Social and Behavioral' in Health Records

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) wants to require health care providers to include "social and behavioral" data in Electronic Health Records (EHR) and to link patient's records to public health departments.

According to a solicitation posted by the Department of Health and Human Services on Sept. 4, the CMS is commissioning the National Academy of Sciences to study how best to add social and behavioral factors to electronic health record reporting.

The agency said adding social and behavioral data to patients' online records will improve health care. "Increasing EHR adoption has the potential to improve health and health care quality," the contract's statement of work (SOW) reads. "Parallel advances in analytic tools applied to such records are fueling new approaches to discovering determinants of population health."

The project sets out to identify "core data standards for behavioral and social determinants of health to be included in EHRs."

Solicitation: [Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)]

200,000 Preventable Deaths A Year: Numbers That Cry Out For Action and Better Reporting

A new CDC study found that almost 200,000 preventable deaths occur each year in the U.S. from heart disease and stroke-about one-fourth of all cardiovascular deaths.

The CDC paper noted that many deaths could be avoided by "addressing the social determinants of health (i.e. economic and social conditions that influence the health of individuals and communities)" while helping people change their "lifestyle behaviors" and treat their risk factors. The paper also noted the need for policy changes.
that increase access to sidewalks and bike lanes, improve local food options, increase access to health care and insurance and "create the physical, social and built environments needed to support health lifestyles."

Access CDC Report: 
Avoidable Deaths from Heart Disease, Stroke, and Hypertensive Disease, United States, 2001-2010

Source: Forbes

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS

Mainstream Media and the Social Determinants of Health

This article explores the dearth of coverage of the social determinants of health by the Canadian mainstream media. It is argued that this neglect is primarily a reflection of political and economic societal structures that has been associated with increasing corporate control of the mainstream media. Applying a critical political economy lens, it is argued that the barriers to having the Canadian mainstream media report on the social determinants of health are so numerous that it may indeed be 'time to call it a day' in regard to having them assist in the dissemination of social determinants of health findings. Recognizing this reality should spur the development of alternative means of communicating with the public in order to develop a citizens' movement to create health-promoting public policy. Recent dissemination efforts related to the Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts provide an example of how this might be accomplished.


"Never mind the logic, give me the numbers": former Australian health ministers' perspectives on the social determinants of health.


RESOURCES

2013 Special Report - Review of social determinants of health and the health divide in the WHO European Region
Commissioned to support the development of the new European policy framework for health and well-being Health 2020, this new reports builds on the global evidence and recommends policies to ensure that progress can be made in reducing health inequities and the health divide across all countries, as well as within these countries. Action is needed on the social determinants of health, across the life-course and in wider social and economic spheres to achieve greater health equity and protect future generations.

Visit the Mid-South TCC website to find more news, resources and scientific publications on social determinants of health.

www.uab.edu/midsouthtcc/resources

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