

How Legal Services Help Health Care Address the Social Determinants of Health

Common Social Determinant of Health	How Legal Services Can Help	Impact of Legal Services on Health / Health Care
<p>INCOME Resources to meet daily basic needs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal denials of food stamps, health insurance, cash benefits, and disability benefits 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing someone's income means s/he makes fewer trade-offs between affording food and health care, including medications. 2. Being able to afford enough healthy food helps people manage chronic diseases and helps children grow and develop.
<p>HOUSING & UTILITIES A healthy physical environment</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure housing subsidies • Improve substandard conditions • Prevent evictions • Protect against utility shut-off 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A stable, decent, affordable home helps a person avoid costly emergency room visits related to homelessness. 2. Consistent housing, heat and electricity helps people follow their medical treatment plans.
<p>EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT Quality educational and job opportunities</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure specialized education services • Prevent and remedy employment discrimination • Enforce workplace rights 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A quality education is the single greatest predictor of a person's adult health. 2. Consistent employment helps provide money for food and safe housing, which also helps avoid costly emergency health care services. 3. Access to health insurance is often linked to employment.
<p>LEGAL STATUS Access to jobs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve veteran discharge status • Clear criminal / credit histories • Assist with asylum applications 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearing a person's criminal history or helping a veteran change their discharge status helps make consistent employment and access to public benefits possible. 2. Consistent employment provides money for food and safe housing, which helps people avoid costly emergency health care services.
<p>PERSONAL & FAMILY STABILITY Safe homes and social support</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure restraining orders for domestic violence • Secure adoption, custody and guardianship for children 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Less violence at home means less need for costly emergency health care services. 2. Stable family relationships significantly reduce stress and allow for better decision-making, including decisions related to health care.

This chart is reprinted from "Framing Legal Care as Health Care," a messaging guide created by the National Center for Medical-Legal Partnership. Please do not recreate it without permission.