



AB 2250: Social Determinants of Health Screenings

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SUMMARY

In order to achieve health equity and optimal health outcomes it is critical to identify and address social determinants of health (SDOH) for individuals and families. AB 2250 would ensure health teams have the resources to conduct social determinants of health screenings, referrals, and community navigation services.

BACKGROUND

Research has connected unmet social needs with poor health status. Social determinants of health are defined as the conditions under which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and includes housing, employment opportunities, environmental conditions, food, transportation, and personal safety. Studies have shown that food insecurity, unemployment, and inadequate housing are all directly attributed to higher risk of chronic diseases, infectious diseases, injuries, childhood development, and poor mental health. For example, food-insecure individuals are 20 percent more likely to report that they have hypertension and 30 percent more likely to report that they have hyperlipidemia than their food-secure counterparts. Inadequate housing conditions such as poor ventilation, pest infestation, and water leaks are directly associated with respiratory diseases such as asthma. One of the barriers to helping individuals and families experiencing unmet social needs is that health providers do not know how to address the needs of patients outside the clinic walls. One survey conducted by the American Academy of Family Physicians, found that family physicians want to help address their patients' needs but face many barriers in offering the support they need. A similar report recently published by the Social Interventions Research and Evaluation Network (SIREN), evaluated the gaps in social screening practices in health care, and revealed that providers that were surveyed expressed experiencing discomfort with not being able to address patient social determinants of health needs.

SPECIFICALLY, THIS BILL

AB 2250 will require health plans and insurers to provide coverage for social determinants of health screenings and access to peer support specialists, lay health workers, social workers, or community health workers. Notably, SDOH screenings will become a covered benefit for Medi-Cal beneficiaries, complementing the community health worker (CHW) services that became covered under Medi-Cal in 2022. By ensuring healthcare teams possess the necessary resources for conducting these screenings and facilitating patient referrals to accredited centralized community providers, the bill aims to bolster healthcare accessibility and support for individuals facing social determinants of health challenges.

SUPPORT

The California Academy of Family Physicians
(sponsor)

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