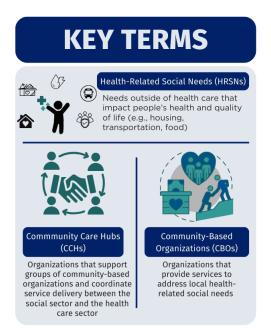# Connecting Health Care with Social Services to Address Health-Related Social Needs:
Guidance and Resources for Community Care Hubs
Community Fact Sheet | August 2024

Addressing the root causes of poor health—**health-related social needs—**is important to improving overall health. A growing way to do this is by supporting collaboration between health care providers and social service providers. **Community care hubs (CCHs)** play a key role in coordinating these partnerships and creating a network of **community-based organizations** providing social services in areas like housing, food/nutrition, and transportation to improve health. See the box below for more information on these key terms from the field.

KEY TERMS

Health-Related Social Needs (HRSNs)
Needs outside of health care that impact people's health and quality of life (e.g., housing, transportation, food)

Commmunity Care Hubs (CCHs)
Organizations that support groups of community-based organizations and coordinate service delivery between the social sector and the health care sector

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)
Organizations that provide services to address local health-related social needs

While CCHs exist across the country, North Carolina is working with CCHs on a larger scale than other states through its Healthy Opportunities Pilots Medicaid program (read more about that program here). Our team studied North Carolina's unique experience to develop a "Community Action and Analysis Plan." That document identifies actions that current and future CCHs nationwide can take to begin, grow, and keep up their work in addressing health-related social needs. It identifies skills, partnerships, data abilities, and resources to support CCHs.

Findings
We interviewed 27 people involved in CCHs and other experts in North Carolina and other states addressing health-related social needs to shape our recommendations.

Help community organizations effectively provide services.

CCHs must ensure they and the community-based organizations have the resources to provide services to address community needs.

- CCHs can better understand their community-based organizations' abilities by asking them to assess needs and resources, and offering training, resources, and expert help to address identified gaps.

- CCHs should also develop their ability to track and use data effectively. Partnering with a data expert, examining current data skills, and setting plans for data work is important.

Assess local community needs and resources to address them.

CCHs must understand their community's needs and identify resources that can support service delivery.

- They can gather information from their own data collection and from outside sources. Conversations with community partners can help CCHs understand the community's needs and resources.

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- Data is important to these assessments, so CCHs should identify key factors to measure. CCHs can then use the results to identify gaps and set areas to focus interventions on.

Support financial success.

CCHs and community-based organizations must learn the complicated financial models to deliver services through the health system.

- Community-based organizations historically receive inconsistent funding. CCHs can help them understand new financial skills, develop a business plan to provide services long-term, and explore steady funding sources.

- Data can be used to look at the current and future finances of CCHs, enable changes to keep CCHs financially healthy, and show how addressing health-related social needs saves money.

Ensure fair access and participation.

Equity is important in helping everyone in the community access the services they need and giving all community-based organizations the same opportunity to provide services.

- Community-based organizations and CCHs must improve equity by addressing barriers people have to receiving services, and involving leadership with ties to the community.

- CCHs must help local, smaller community-based organizations with deep community connections to participate in this work.

- CCHs must gather data on race, gender, ethnicity, age, and location to ensure they are helping those most in need.

Coordinate service delivery across health and social service partners.

CCHs play an important role in supporting collaboration across groups working to address health-related social needs.

- They should help make sure these groups are on the same page through training and relationship-building. For successful connections, everyone involved must have strong systems for communicating and managing their work.

Create a plan to monitor and evaluate work.

CCHs should track the performance of their community-based organizations and make changes, if needed.

- They can track performance by creating plans to look at how well social service programs are working to provide services and help the community. Selecting the best data points to track is important for correctly understanding how programs are working and setting attainable goals.

- CCHs can use technology to monitor and display data in visually creative and useful ways.

In summary

North Carolina's work to address health-related social needs hopes to expand, and more attention is put on supporting CCHs nationwide. Our guide offers key advice for CCHs.

- Working with health care groups is new for many community-based organization and requires CCH support.

- Working with health care groups is CCHs and community-based organizations should use educational resources to build skills.

- Understanding what matters to all of to all of the people involved and how to collaborate with them is important to successfully deliver services.

- CCHs need to consider community opinions in all efforts to address health-related social needs.

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