OUR KC Common Language

**Understanding Determinants of Health and Life Expectancy**

Determinates of health are conditions in the environments in which people are ***born***, ***live***, ***learn***, ***work***, ***play***, ***worship***, and ***age*** that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. Conditions (e.g., social, economic, and physical) in these various environments and settings (e.g., school, church, workplace, and neighborhood) have been referred to as “***place***.” Understanding the relationship between how residents experience “place” and the impact of “place” on health is fundamental to the determinants of health—including both social and physical determinants.

Examples of *social determinants* include:

* Availability of resources to meet daily needs (e.g., safe housing and local food markets)
* Access to educational, economic, and job opportunities
* Access to health care services
* Quality of education and job training
* Availability of community-based resources in support of community living and opportunities for recreational and leisure-time activities
* Transportation options
* Social norms and attitudes (e.g., discrimination, racism, and distrust of government)
* Exposure to crime, violence, and social disorder (e.g., presence of trash and lack of cooperation in a community)
* Socioeconomic conditions (e.g., concentrated poverty and the stressful conditions that accompany it)
* Residential segregation
* Language/Literacy
* Access to mass media and emerging technologies (e.g., cell phones, the Internet, and social media)
* Culture

Examples of *physical determinants* include:

* Natural environment, such as green space (e.g., trees and grass) or weather (e.g., climate change)
* Built environment, such as buildings, sidewalks, bike lanes, and roads
* Worksites, schools, and recreational settings
* Housing and community design
* Exposure to toxic substances and other physical hazards
* Physical barriers, especially for people with disabilities
* Aesthetic elements (e.g., good lighting, trees, and benches)

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