



# Check your practice: Social Determinants of Health

## Best Advice Guide: Quick Reference

Health and well-being are shaped by social and economic factors known as the social determinants of health (SDH), which are defined as the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age.

Attention to the SDH is integral to population health and family medicine. Many family physicians in Canada recognize that it is difficult to treat the immediate health concerns of their patients without addressing in some way the underlying social conditions that give rise to poor health.



### Consider the following three levels of recommendations...



#### Micro (in the immediate clinical environment):

- Regularly screen patients for poverty, and intervene where necessary
- Ensure your practice is accessible to all patients, especially marginalized populations
- Offer advanced access and same-day scheduling
- Build an antipoverty team that is shaped around your community's needs
- Understand and provide forms for provincial/territorial social assistance programs



#### Meso (in the local community):

- Collect and use data about your local population's health and well-being
- Provide undergraduate and postgraduate experiential learning about the social determinants of health
- Act as a health advocate and use the CanMEDS-FM Framework as a guide
- Provide on-site care for those who cannot make it to a physical clinic



#### Macro (in the humanitarian realm):

- Join or create an organization to advocate both with and on behalf of communities
- Engage with medical, health care, and social service organizations to provide organizational advocacy for improved SDH
- Advocate for remuneration arrangements and funding that encourages SDH care
- Collaborate with other organizations to establish broad intersectoral support for healthy public policies that address upstream determinants of health
- Advocate for increased focus and exposure to SDH in undergraduate and postgraduate medical education

For more information about incorporating the SDH in the [Patient's Medical Home](#) and for details about resources available to you, refer to the Best Advice guide [Social Determinants of Health](#).