

Investing in Community Health

A Toolkit for Hospitals

November 2020



WHY INVESTING IN SOCIAL DETERMINANTS MATTERS

The health of our
communities is tied
to how we invest in
them.

1. Communities need access to good jobs, affordable homes, safe places to gather and play, healthy food options, and opportunities to shape the decisions that affect them.
2. Decades of structural racism and disinvestment have resulted in places of concentrated poverty and significant health inequity.
3. COVID-19 is disproportionately harming the people who live in those communities, especially Black and Latinx people.
4. Community investment transactions improve social, economic, and environmental conditions in disinvested communities—which in turn improves community health—while producing some economic return for investors.

The scale of transformation
needed in communities
can't be achieved through
grants alone.

USING INVESTMENT
TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL ENDS

**When hospitals
add investment
to their strategies
for improving
community health...**

1. More dollars can flow to making the long-term changes we want to see.
2. Precious grant dollars can be saved for things that cannot be funded in other ways.
3. More strategies can be used to solve the problems we care about.

USING INVESTMENT TO ACHIEVE SOCIAL ENDS

Grants meet immediate needs.
Investments create long-term solutions.

GRANTS	INVESTMENTS
<div>Salaries</div> <div>Food banks</div> <div>Housing vouchers</div> <div>Workforce training</div> <div>Transit passes</div> <div>Childcare subsidies</div>	<div>Buildings</div> <div>Grocery stores</div> <div>Affordable housing units</div> <div>Loans to small businesses</div> <div>Transit system buildout</div> <div>Early childhood centers</div>

When we talk about upstream community investment in the social determinants, we are *not* talking about:



MOVING HEALTHCARE OUTSIDE OF THE HEALTH INSTITUTION

Funding mammogram vans or offering health screenings at affordable housing developments may improve preventive care and improve health outcomes, but it is not community investment.



PROVIDING TRANSIT PASSES TO PATIENTS

This addresses the social needs of individuals but does not change the root causes of poor health for the community.



PAYING FOR HOUSING REFERRALS

This gets at the key connection between housing and health, but it is a service that must be paid for with grants, and it does not change the availability of housing in the community.

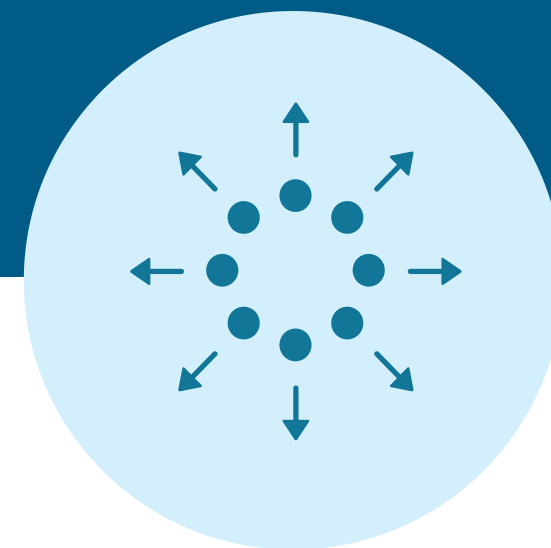
Hospitals and health systems have an array of assets that can be harnessed to create healthier communities through community investment.



Financial Resources



Land



Expertise



Relationships

HOSPITAL MOTIVATIONS FOR INVESTING IN SOCIAL DETERMINANTS

1. MISSION	Growing recognition that good health depends on many factors besides access to healthcare is leading health systems to intervene in the social, economic, and environmental conditions experienced by their patients, plan members, and neighbors.	5. STRATEGY	Some institutions want to gain experience and be at the cutting edge of innovation for health care reform.
2. INSTITUTIONAL SELF-INTEREST	Investing in projects that are prioritized by elected officials and the community helps hospitals build relational capital and goodwill.	6. REPUTATION	Some hospitals and health systems seek recognition as innovators and field leaders.
3. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE	As tax-exempt institutions, non-profit hospitals have a legal obligation to serve their communities.	7. FINANCIAL RETURNS	These investments can generate economic returns both directly, through interest payments, and indirectly, through savings resulting from fewer unnecessary hospitalizations and lower cost of care.
4. COMPETITIVENESS	Investing in neighborhoods near hospital facilities can help attract and retain both staff and patients.		

APPROACH IN ACTION

Columbus, Ohio



Healthy Homes Zone on Columbus's South Side

PROJECT OVERVIEW



Healthy Neighborhoods Healthy Families—a collaborative public-private partnership among Nationwide Children's Hospital, a faith-based Community Development Corporation, United Way, and the Mayor's Office—was founded in 2008 to improve child health in Columbus, Ohio.

MILESTONES

- In 10 years, the partnership has produced roughly \$80 million in affordable housing development (completed or in contract) on Columbus's South Side.
- Recent data shows positive trends in hospital usage on the South Side in contrast to comparison neighborhoods.
- The Mayor's Office and United Way have asked the partnership to expand its housing efforts into Columbus's Linden neighborhood.

APPROACH IN ACTION

San Bernardino, California



Arrowhead Grove in San Bernardino, California

PROJECT OVERVIEW



Dignity Health (now CommonSpirit) has long allocated a portion of its assets to community investment (portfolio of \$100+ million).

MILESTONES

- Dignity invested \$1.2 million in an affordable housing project in San Bernardino. Dignity also convened stakeholders to think about how to invest in the city.
- The California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) was one of the stakeholders invited to the convening. The SGC recently awarded San Bernardino \$20 million for a 38-acre, five-phase, mixed-income housing project, called Arrowhead Grove.

GETTING STARTED

1. LAY THE GROUNDWORK	Assess institutional understanding of social determinants and educate your hospital community about them, convene a cross-department team to support the work, and engage your board and senior leaders.	4. IDENTIFY INVESTABLE OPPORTUNITIES	With your cross-department team, determine your institutional investment priorities, including what resources are available to allocate for investment. Working with community members and your community investment partners, figure out which deals and projects in your communities could make best use of your investment.
2. CHOOSE YOUR FOCUS	Identify the most pressing health needs of your communities, their root causes, and the people they most affect. Use that information to determine your investment priority.	5. CREATE A STRATEGY	Set a general goal with specific targets for impact, develop criteria for prioritizing investment opportunities and making decisions about which to pursue, identify partners, select your initial investments, and take action.
3. FIND PARTNERS	Reach out to community members and community investment stakeholders to find out what they are doing to address community health needs and how you might get involved.	6. ENHANCE THE LOCAL COMMUNITY INVESTMENT SYSTEM	Assess the policies and regulations, available funding, skills and capacities of local actors, and institutional relationships that undergird community investment in your communities. Look for opportunities to improve the system through advocacy and policy change to support greater investment, engaging stakeholders who have been overlooked or excluded, and/or finding new roles for your hospital to play.

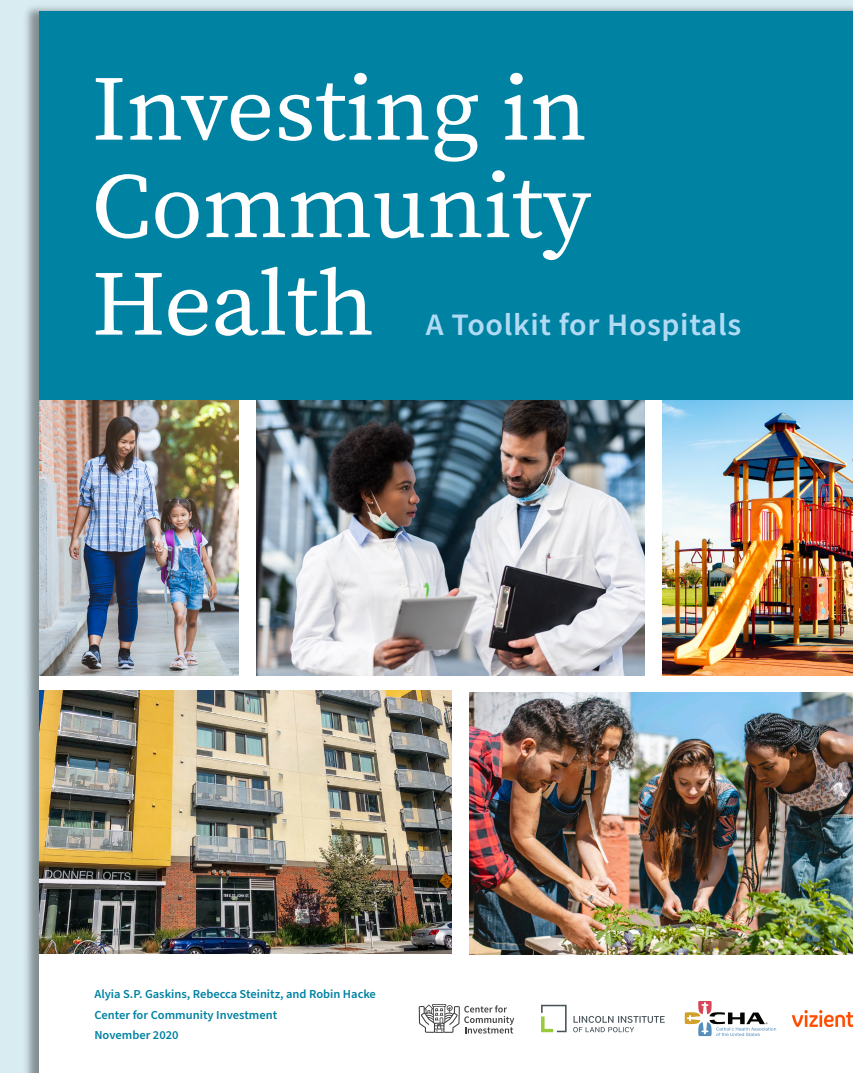
Learn more

Access more resources on our website:
centerforcommunityinvestment.org/resources

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Upstream All the Way: Why Pioneering Health Institutions are Investing Upstream to Improve Community Health

July 2019