

## **Social Determinants Accelerator Act of 2021**

### ***Empowering Communities to Address Social Determinants of Health***

Economic and social conditions have a powerful impact on our health and wellness. Stable housing, reliable transportation and access to healthy foods are all factors that can make a difference in the prevention and management of many health conditions like diabetes, asthma and heart disease. Known as social determinants of health, a focus on these non-medical factors can improve health outcomes and wellbeing.

States are increasingly looking to deploy social determinants of health interventions to manage costs and improve health outcomes within their Medicaid programs. However, one of the greatest challenges to high-impact interventions is the difficulty in navigating and coordinating fragmented and complex programs aimed at addressing healthcare needs, food insecurity, housing instability, workforce supports, and transportation reliability, among others.

#### *The Social Determinants Accelerator Program*

The Social Determinants Accelerator Act of 2021 will help states and communities devise strategies to better leverage existing programs and authorities to improve the health and well-being of those participating in Medicaid.

The legislation will provide planning grants and technical assistance to state, local and Tribal governments to help them devise innovative, evidence-based approaches to coordinate services and improve outcomes and cost-effectiveness.

Specifically, under the Social Determinants Accelerator Act of 2021:

- The Secretary of Health and Human Services would convene an inter-agency technical advisory council on social determinants of health. The Council would include program experts from across the federal government, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Labor and the United States Department of Agriculture, as well as state and local government officials, the private sector and community-based organizations.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), in consultation with the Council, would make available up to \$25 million in grants to state, local and Tribal governments to develop Social Determinants Accelerator Plans. Plans would:
  - Target a group of high-need Medicaid patients, like homeless individuals, older workers with arthritis, nursing home patients, or mothers diagnosed with post-partum depression;
  - Identify the key outcomes to be achieved through improved coordination of health and non-health services and use of evidence-based interventions; and
  - Include a plan for linking data across programs measuring the impact of the new approach on the health of participants and the return-on-investment for taxpayers.
- The Council would provide technical assistance to grantees to help them implement their plans by identifying federal authorities, opportunities and strategies for braiding and blending funds and designing rigorous evaluations. To ensure all jurisdictions can benefit, the Council will broadly disseminate best practices and opportunities for cross-program coordination.