

Social Determinants Accelerator Act of 2021

SECTION BY SECTION

SECTION 1 – SHORT TITLE

- The Social Determinants Accelerator Act of 2021

SECTION 2 – FINDINGS; PURPOSE

- **Findings** – There is a significant body of evidence showing that economic and social conditions have a powerful impact on individual and population health outcomes and well-being, as well as medical costs. However, state, local and tribal governments face challenges in coordinating benefits and services delivered through Medicaid and other social service programs due to complex rules and administration.
- **Purpose** – To assist state, local, and tribal governments in improving health and social outcomes for individuals and the return on investment for health and social services programs by: (1) establishing effective technical assistance to overcome barriers to coordinating services across sectors; (2) creating a pipeline of state and locally designed, cross-sector strategies that will generate rigorous evidence about their impact; (3) enlisting state and local governments and the service providers of such governments as partners in identifying federal statutory, regulatory, and administrative challenges in improving health and social outcomes of, cost-effectiveness of, and return on investment from federal spending on individuals enrolled in Medicaid; and (4) developing strategies to improve health and social outcomes without denying services or restricting eligibility of vulnerable populations.

SECTION 3 – SOCIAL DETERMINANTS ACCELERATOR COUNCIL

- **Establishment** – Instructs the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS), in coordination with the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), to establish an interagency, intergovernmental technical advisory council, known as the Social Determinants Accelerator Interagency Council (the Council).
- **Membership** – The Council will include designees from federal agencies and up to six state, local and Tribal health and human service agencies, public housing authorities, state and local government budget offices, Medicaid agencies, or national consumer advocacy organizations.
- **Duties** – The Council will be responsible for (1) making recommendations to the HHS Secretary and the CMS Administrator regarding the criteria for making awards; (2) identifying federal authorities and opportunities to improve coordination of funding and administration of federal programs; (3) providing targeted technical assistance to states developing Social Determinants Accelerator Plans; (4) providing an annual report to Congress; (5) developing and disseminating evaluation guidelines and standards that may be used to assess planned interventions and approaches; (6) seeking feedback on how to improve the Council's technical assistance; (7) soliciting applications for grants; (8) coordinating with other relevant cross-agency initiatives; (9) drafting and making publicly available a report on federal cross-agency opportunities to address social determinants of health; and (10) providing technical assistance to state, local, and Tribal

jurisdictions seeking to develop Social Determinants Accelerator Plans, including plans associated with any new pilot program carried out by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- **Schedule** – The Council will convene within 60 days to develop a schedule and plan for carrying out the above duties.
- **Report to Congress** – The Council will submit an annual report to Congress which includes (1) a list of the Council members; (2) activities and expenditures of the Council; (3) summaries of the interventions and approaches that will be supported by state, local, and Tribal governments that received a grant; (4) feedback received from state and local governments on ways to improve the technical assistance of the Council, including findings from a third-party survey and actions the Council plans to take in response; and (5) the major statutory, regulatory, and administrative challenges identified by state, local, and Tribal governments that received a grant and the actions that federal agencies are taking to address such challenges.
- **FACA Applicability** – The Federal Advisory Committee Act does not apply to the Council.
- **Council Procedures** – The Secretary, in consultation with the Comptroller General and Director of the Office of Management and Budget, will establish procedures for the Council to (1) ensure adequate resources are available to execute responsibilities; (2) effectively coordinate with other relevant advisory bodies and working groups to avoid unnecessary duplication; (3) create transparency to the public and Congress with regard to Council membership, costs, and activities; and (4) avoid conflicts of interest that would jeopardize the ability of the Council to make decisions and provide recommendations.

SECTION 4 – SOCIAL DETERMINANTS ACCELERATOR GRANTS TO STATES OR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- **Grants to State, Local, and Tribal Governments** – Up to 25 grants to state, local or Tribal governments to develop Social Determinants Accelerator Plans will be awarded within six months of enactment.
- **Applications for Grants** – Applications must include information related to the target population that would benefit from the Social Determinants Accelerator Plan, the objective or goals, the sources and scope of inefficiencies that would be addressed, the proposed interventions, and key stakeholders that will participate in developing the plan, among other details as determined by the Secretary.
- **Use of Grants** – Grants may be used to convene and coordinate with relevant government entities and stakeholders, to identify populations of individuals who may benefit from the proposed approaches, to engage qualified research experts to advise on relevant research and design a proposed evaluation plan, to collaborate with the Council on developing a Social Determinants Accelerator Plan, and to prepare and submit a final Plan to the Council.
- **Social Determinants Accelerator Plans** – Social Determinants Accelerator Plans must include information on the target population that would benefit, the proposed interventions or approaches and the intended objectives and outcome goals, a plan for accessing and linking data to enable coordinated benefits and services, the stakeholders involved in the planning process, and a proposed evaluation plan, among other information.

SECTION 5 – FUNDING

- **Funding** – Authorizes \$25 million in funding for fiscal years 2022 through 2026, of which up to \$5 million may be used to fund the Council’s activities.
- **Rural Set-Aside** – Sets aside up to 20 percent of the funding – with limited exceptions – to award grants to develop plans that will primarily serve rural populations.
- **Rule of Construction** – Federal agencies represented on the Council are not prevented from contributing additional funding from other sources to support activities to improve the effectiveness of the Council.