

Title: Addressing Social Determinants of Health at an Urban Primary Care Clinic
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Abstract:

Social determinants of health (SDoH) significantly impact patient outcomes, particularly in underserved populations. At United Family Physicians, a family medicine residency clinic providing primary care in St. Paul, MN, the Community Resource Questionnaire (CRQ) is used to screen for social needs and facilitate connections to community resources. Among patients screened at the clinic, 26% identified at least one social need. While this is nearly four times the system average and demonstrates the high need prevalence, only 22% of patients due for screening were screened in the previous month. This prompts the process evaluation to identify barriers and opportunities for improvement with the goal of increasing screening rates. A root cause analysis model was used as a pilot for data collection, including stakeholder engagement, analysis of screening rates and evaluation of barriers. A three-part intervention was implemented targeting multiple levels of the screening process, including awareness, CRQ distribution, collection and provider follow-through. Re-education was provided by the business team manager and nurse manager at monthly meetings, and the physician team received additional training during a noon conference. Following the intervention, provider awareness improved significantly, with correct responses on provider surveys increasing from 29-71% pre-intervention to over 92-100% post-intervention. The refined screening workflow was intended to improve CRQ completion rates, strengthen provider engagement and increase patient access to community resources. Future directions may include monitoring outcomes, determining an appropriate re-education interval and advocating for expanded social work services to sustain progress. These findings demonstrate the importance of structured, system-level interventions to improve SDoH screening and response in primary care settings.