Strengthening the Social Safety Net
Wake Forest School of Medicine, Division of FaithHealth Grand Rounds
Don Jonas, AVP – Social Strategy & Impact
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Strengthening the Social Safety Net

Life barriers & opportunities for people with limited resources

Social and economic needs of health system employees

Build partnerships beyond hospital walls to improve community
Life barriers & opportunities for people with limited resources
“a zip code is a stronger predictor of a person’s health than a genetic code”
When we treat poor patients, we face not just one ailment, but two: the illness itself, and the economic fragility that underlines it.

“All scientific evidence indicates that health and disease are almost universally the result of social causes . . . most hospitals and physician offices are repair shops, trying to correct the damage from what are known as the social determinants of health.”

(Donald Berwick, Health Reformer, JAMA, July 21, 2020)
Housing has a Direct and Cascading Affect on Health and Wellbeing Over the Life Course

1. Conditions Within the Home
   - Lead poisoning
     - Impaired brain and nervous system development
     - Lower intelligence and reading disabilities
   - Substandard housing
     - Respiratory conditions from water leaks, poor ventilation, and pest infestation
     - Asthma is the most common chronic disease among children

2. Neighborhood Conditions
   - Physical characteristics
     - Physical inactivity - unsafe places due to crime, violence, or pollution
     - Diminished nutrition – limited access to grocery stores
     - Social Isolation – limited contact with others
     - Low income – few employment opportunities

3. Housing Affordability
   - Affordable housing
     - Disproportionate spending on housing - > 30 percent of household income
     - Forego basic needs - basic needs including nutrition and health care
     - 71.2% of those in lowest income quartile spend ≥ 30 percent on housing
35 percent

About 35 percent of all Mecklenburg households with children are food insecure – nearly double the national average.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micronutrient</th>
<th>Deficiency manifestations</th>
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</table>
| Iodine        | • Poor somatic and central nervous system growth, sluggishness, inactivity, lethargy, poor concentration, impaired cognition and incoordination.  
                • Sequel leading to minimal brain function to a syndrome of severe intellectual disability.  
                • Global loss of 10–15 intellectual quotient |
| Iron          | • Listlessness, apathy, lack of vigor and enthusiasm, lower scores on motor development and cognitive tests and poor school grades  
                • Less myelination and altered neurotransmitter function |
| Zinc          | • Lethargy, decreased visual memory, impaired cognitive development and neuropsychological problems |
| Selenium      | • Depression, low mood, low energy level, anxiety and stress |
| Choline       | • Poor memory and mental functioning |
| DHA           | • Short memory span, poor ability for discrimination, aggression, hostility, learning disability, dyslexia? attention deficit disorder |
"There is a magic window during pregnancy...It’s a time when the desire to be a good mother and raise a healthy, happy child creates motivation to overcome incredible obstacles including poverty, instability or abuse with the help of a well-trained nurse."

David Olds, Ph.D.
Founder, Nurse-Family Partnership
The brain is one of the only organs not fully developed at birth.

90% of critical brain development happens in the first five years of life.
Early Intervention is the KEY

Graph Source: C.A. Nelson (2000)
Social and economic needs of health system employees
Results of Teammate Wellbeing Survey Final Numbers

Indicated Need Total Responses: 325 / 490 = 66%

**FOOD**
- 53% Worry about food running out with no money to buy more
- 28% Ran out of food
- 22% Unable to get utilities (heat, electricity)

**UTILITIES**
- 20% Concerned about school aged children (preK-12th grade) learning needs
- 10% Unable to get utilities (heat, electricity)

**LEARNING**
- 20% Concerned about school aged children (preK-12th grade) learning needs
- 12% Stayed outside, in a car, tent, shelter, hotel or someone else's home

**CAREER DEVELOPMENT**
- 26% Aware of AH Career Development Center* (error in Paper Surveys)
- 52% Experience social barriers to pursuing additional degrees, certifications

**TRANSPORTATION**
- 15% Lack of transportation kept you from daily living

**INTERNET**
- 30% Lack access to computer and internet needs

**HOUSING**
- 31% Worried about losing your housing

**MENTAL WELL-BEING**
- 23% Able to access mental health services, when needed
- 34% Experience a 2-week period where you felt down, lonely, depressed or hopeless

**FOOD CAREER DEVELOPMENT UTILITIES LEARNING TRANSPORTATION INTERNET HOUSING MENTAL WELL-BEING**

**Top 5 Zip Codes Represented**
1. 28208*
2. 28216*
3. 28215
4. 28205*
5. 28213
*Indicates Charlotte crescent

**HOUSEHOLD INCOME**
- Under $30,000: 28%
- $30,000-$49,999: 22%
- $50,000+: 12%
- Chose not to answer: 38%

**# in HOUSEHOLD**
- Zero: 194
- One - Two: 210
- Three - Four: 65
- Five+: 12

**TOTAL DEPENDANTS**
- 170
- 231
- 83

**Aware of AH Career Development Center**
* (error in Paper Surveys)
Some teammates have needs that can be solved more immediately and more easily.

Teammate SDOH Intervention: Sonya

- Sonya is an EVS lead, work has been very busy and stressful, especially since she just started working 3rd shift
- She and her husband have three teenage boys who eat “A LOT” and who are at home for school during COVID

Health Coach reaches out to Sonya

Problem #1
She and her husband are struggling to have food on the table.

Problem #2
Something went wrong with water line and her front yard was dug up for the pipes to be fixed. Due to this problem, she and her family have received a $600 water bill.

Health Coach connects Sonya with resources

Resolutions
- Walked Sonya through how to apply to Teammate Emergency Care Fund
- Gave Sonya information about Common Heart Food Pantry
- Connected Sonya with AH Community Resource Hub

Coaching Notes

Some teammates have needs that can be solved more immediately and more easily.
Sarah has been out of work for 2 months due to COVID. She is behind on bills. She is currently working with HOPE Federal program for housing and also applied for additional federal services. She received $1000 through Atrium Health Teammate Care Fund. She wants to work more hours.

- Problem #1
  - She is still struggling with bills. She's been having to pay late fees. She is only able to cover utilities right now.

- Problem #2
  - She may get evicted. Her focus is trying to catch up on rent so the eviction can be reversed. She finds herself having to make decisions between two necessities.

- Problem #3
  - She is also still trying to pay her son’s college tuition.

- Problem #4
  - She has an elderly uncle with early stages of dementia living with her.

Health Coach connects Sarah with resources:
- Gave Housing and Utility assistance info over the phone
- Encouraged Sarah to apply for AH HOPE Housing
- Encouraged Sarah to take Utility Assistance (and apply utility money to pay rent)
- Coached Sarah to contact her leader for additional hours

Sarah expressed frustration and sadness because she has never been through this before. She was very grateful for the call.
**Coaching Support: Referrals**

The Community Resource Hub has been *the* essential tool to help our teammates find solutions within reach. In addition, the referrals below were shared with teammates in need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Finances (22%)</th>
<th>Food (13%)</th>
<th>Housing (8%)</th>
<th>Medical / Mental Health (7%)</th>
<th>Transportation (1%)</th>
<th>Utility/Internet Access (2%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teammate Emergency Fund</td>
<td>Loaves and Fishes</td>
<td>HOPE Housing</td>
<td>Atrium Health: Billing Services, Scheduling, etc.</td>
<td>Public Transportation (Bus Schedule)</td>
<td>AT&amp;T</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feed My Lamb</td>
<td>Crisis Assistance Ministry</td>
<td>HR Benefits (PTO, HSA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Life Baptist Food Pantry</td>
<td>Anson Crisis Ministry</td>
<td>EAP</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Crisis Center Food Pantry</td>
<td>Clover Area Assistance Center</td>
<td>FMLA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mobile Market</td>
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<td>Dependent Back-Up Care</td>
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<td>Reeder Memorial Baptist Church Food Pantry</td>
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Predictive analytics to identify teammates at social risk

- Key indicator: # of pay periods a full-time teammate earns less than $500

- Increased social risk is associated with a 6x increase in Call Outs

- Teammates earning less than $500 in three or more pay periods over one year
  - Indicates that there may be as many as 1,372 teammates at risk
  - Helps define an early warning indicator for teammates who could be at-risk

- Rolling out soon in Charlotte and by end of 2021 across Atrium’s enterprise:
  - 25 question survey to all teammates on their work anniversary
  - Includes a social needs question: During the last 12 months, have your essential needs been met?

Call Outs are high in this group. 23% have had at least one call out shift in the last 90 days.

Source: Strategic Workforce Planning, using Atrium Health teammate data
Beyond hospital walls... to improve community

In big ways...
  • NOAH
  • Essential needs
  • People experiencing homelessness

But every little step forward matters
  • One example:
    • This afternoon, new partnership with Feeding Charlotte
Essential Needs: 250 Teammates dedicated 1:1 assistance

Collaborative partners (e.g. Care Ring, Charlotte Works, Goodwill) provide extended services in key areas beyond 90 days.
Charlotte-Mecklenburg County

People experiencing homelessness, Aug 2019-Feb 2021

- **3,456** People experiencing homelessness
  - +434 in last month
  - +381 In last year

- **331** Average total days to access permanent housing
- **10,535** Households most at risk of eviction due to COVID-19 (as of Sept. 2020)
- **81k+** Renter households paying >30% of income for housing

Source: mecklenburghousingdata.org, as of 2/28/2021
Goal:
To make homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring

Help Charlotte-Mecklenburg become a national leader in addressing housing instability and homelessness in the next five years, by offering aligned strategies, unified goals, and clear funding pathways.
Questions and Thank You!