



A driving force for health equity

Submitted via electronic email

May 30, 2024

The Honorable Richard Roth, Chair
Senate Committee on Health
1021 O Street, Room 3310
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: A.B. 2250, Social Determinants of Health: Screening and Outreach

Dear Senator Roth,

On behalf of OCHIN, I appreciate the opportunity to offer support for AB 2250, which would further health care quality and equity by ensuring coverage of social determinants of health screening. In California, OCHIN network members serve 2.1 million patients including more than 690,000 covered under Medi-Cal. We strongly support each provision of this bill, which is critical for providers underserved and rural communities. We applaud requiring state health plans and health insurers to not only cover screening for such services, but also requiring such programs and plans to provide clinicians with adequate access to peer support specialists, lay health workers, social workers, or community health workers.

For over two decades, OCHIN has advanced equitable health care solutions by leveraging the strength of our network's unique data set and the practical experience of our members to drive technology innovation at scale for patients and providers in underserved communities. With more than 2.75 million social risk screenings conducted to date among more than 1.5 million unique patients, providers across the OCHIN network manage SDOH at both an individual and community level. This work has produced the nation's largest EHR-embedded dataset on SDOH in primary care community clinics. While the impact of SDOH is well-understood, the payment and care models used to serve patients in underserved communities still do not adequately address structural inequality. Ensuring that payment models and demonstrations evolve with, and adapt to, ever-changing dimensions of care delivery will allow for increased access and improved health outcomes for all patients in every community across our nation.

Addressing SDOH is vital to overcoming long-standing health disparities that have only worsened as public health emergencies including the COVID-19 pandemic, an epidemic in opioid use disorder, and a mental health crisis have converged. Evidence from the last decade-plus has shown that only 10% to 20% of a person's health status is related to the clinical care that they receive, with genetics and behavioral and social factors composing the rest. We support screening for social determinants of health for the most underserved populations. This is a critical step towards bridging the gaps in health care for communities that lack access to integrated comprehensive care and for our providers that require sufficient resources to successfully achieve a whole-person centered care approach.

We applaud your efforts and support this bill which would further health care quality, access, and sustainability. Please contact me, stollj@ochin.org, if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jennifer Stoll". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Stoll
Chief External Affairs Officer