



A driving force for health equity

Submitted via electronic email

June 28, 2024

The Honorable Tina Smith
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chis Murphy
36 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Re: *Support for S. 3847: Improving Social Determinants of Health Act of 2024*

Dear Senators Smith and Murphy,

On behalf of OCHIN, I appreciate the opportunity to provide support for *S. 3847: Improving Social Determinants of Health Act of 2024*. OCHIN is a national nonprofit health information technology innovation and research network that serves over 2,000 community health care sites including **federally qualified health centers, rural health clinics, local public health agencies and Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs)** with more than 33,000 providers in 43 states, reaching more than 6.1 million patients. This legislation is essential to advance the critical need to address social drivers of health (SDOH) that impact equitable access to care and patient health outcomes.

OCHIN has the nation's largest EHR-embedded dataset on SDOH in primary care community health centers. Over 2.75 million SDOH screenings—1.5+ million unique patients—have been electronically documented by OCHIN network members through April 2024. **OCHIN's ongoing partnership with our community health center network members and their pioneering work in this area has taught us that SDOH collection, interventions, and analyses are complex, resource intensive, and require staff training and patient trust.** A growing body of research, including by [nationally recognized OCHIN researchers](#), has demonstrated that SDOH impacts patient health outcomes even when patients receive evidence-based clinical standards of care. Implementation research and technical assistance are vital priorities to scale SDOH screening, use, referral and resolution.

This legislation would encourage collaboration within the CDC to carry out a program, the Social Determinants of Health Program with the purpose of improving health outcomes and the capacity of agencies and organizations to address SDOH. We strongly support the creation of grants for entities to address SDOH within their communities in collaboration with stakeholders, such as health systems, and for research to improve practices for SDOH and technical assistance and training for capacity building. The *Improving Social Determinants of Health Act of 2024* would foster collaboration to establish improved SDOH activities across the CDC, impacted communities, within the scope of research and training for entities to increase capacity building for impacted and vulnerable populations.

OCHIN supports this legislation that would improve the SDOH activities through the coordination between government, community organizations and entities, and communities themselves. Please contact me at stolli@ochin.org if we can provide any additional information to support your efforts.

Sincerely,

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

Jennifer Stoll
Chief External Affairs Officer
External Affairs