Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
PolicyLab

How Promoting Health Also Means Supporting Financial Well-being in 200 Words

Health Equity

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Poverty produces persistent hardship, which can take a toll on the physical and mental health of caregivers. As proponents of health, it is incumbent upon medical professionals and health care systems to use our resources and innovation to address this critical social determinant of health.

When partnering with patients and families to make the best decisions about their health, we should do all we can to empower them in the wealth-building that allows for improved outcomes. For example, I wrote recently about how we can support families in receiving their Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which has been linked with long-term benefits such as better school outcomes for recipient children and increased rates of employment in adulthood.

We also have a role in effecting local and national policies to address financial barriers to health, whether by advocating for federal expansion of the EITC or collaborating with financial service organizations to improve the health and financial well-being of the community. This will be particularly important in the current economic environment as families may be forced to make difficult decisions around their health and that of their children.

Healthy People 2020 called for us "to achieve health equity, eliminate disparities and improve the health of all groups." Needless to say, there is more work to be done. Key to achieving health equity is to not only acknowledge that disparities are often driven by social conditions, but to *act* together to address those conditions.

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Strategic Operations & Communications Director Lauren Walens.

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