

NC's Plan for Addressing Social Determinants of Health

NC's State Health Director and Chief Medical Officer for the NC Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Dr. Betsy Tilson recently shared with the members of the Developmental Disabilities Consortium how DHHS is working to address social determinants of health (SDOH) for Medicaid recipients.

The state is looking at a multi-layered approach to tackling this issue that includes: mapping social determinant indicators; using a statewide resource database; and developing a standardized screening for unmet resource needs. A statewide mapping tool is in process that can mine 12 different social determinant statistics per a neighborhood area that includes: social/education, economic, housing, transportation, and other important indicators. In addition, a resource database will offer up-to-date information on community resources available and will be accessible to anyone via the internet and/or a call center. The database will also track outcomes of referrals made from the database, connect local community service providers with those in need and more. A standardized screening tool to identify possible unmet health related needs is also in process. A technical advisory group of stakeholders has been identified to work on the development of this tool. Some of these initiatives will be piloted prior to statewide implementation.

Per Dr. Tilson, the state envisions utilizing the Prepaid Health Plans (PHPs) and Advanced Medical Homes as part of the 1115 Medicaid waiver as a way to begin incorporating SDOH into individual care. According to Dr. Tilson, regardless of the progression of Medicaid transformation, the state plans to take this effort forward.