



Reducing Barriers to Healthcare Access

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[Health Leadership & Learning Network](#) is helping healthcare and social service workers better support their clients, by providing them with tools and knowledge necessary to breakdown barriers to health care. Courses in topics such as [Patient Navigation](#), [Health Coaching](#), and [Cultural Safety](#) introduce interventions that consider how social determinants of health impact wellbeing. These influences need to be understood in order for service providers to ensure the continued wellbeing of their patients and/or clients despite their socioeconomic circumstances. Even now, more than ever it is imperative that workers recognize how communities and individuals can be uniquely affected during Covid-19.

In the United States for example we can see how social inequalities have struck vulnerable populations increasing health disparities. Public health workers have been recognizing how certain communities within urban centres such as New York city are being disproportionately affected. African-American and Latino communities that have already been experiencing health inequalities are now experiencing a disproportionate amount of death and exposure to covid-19. For instance, three quarters of all covid-19 deaths in Milwaukee were African American and in St. Louis all but three covid-19 deaths were African Americans (Sabin , Cooney, & Dorn, 2020). Understanding how social inequalities are linked to determinants of health is important to dealing with covid-19 and the burden of disease.

The current economic situation will also affect many households and families especially those that were previously experiencing financial hardships. There could be a shift from healthier diets to more processed meals in order to stretch limited incomes. Children who once relied on their school's healthy snack program no longer getting the adequate but also possibly deepening health inequalities in the future.

Overall, social inequalities and health disparities that existed before the pandemic are further amplified, creating more harm for already vulnerable populations. As healthcare workers race to understand more about the disease, tackling social determinants are important for prevention. People who are facing housing insecurity, homelessness and overcrowding are at higher risk to this disease. Indigenous populations in Canada for example, face many of these challenges. In addition to housing insecurity, many are also challenged with the inability to easily access healthcare facilities due to their remote location.

Health Leadership & Learning Network understand that this is a difficult time we are living in. We are committed to using a social determinants of health lens in our courses to allow for these discussions around health equity and health care access to take place.

References:

- Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2020. Statement - Inequality amplified by COVID-19 crisis. [ONLINE] Available at: <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/eng/content/statement-inequality-amplified-covid-19-crisis>. [Accessed 14 May 2020].
- Sabin , M. L., Cooney, R. E., & Dorn, A. v. (2020). *Covid-19 Exaerbating inequalities in the US* (Vol. 395). United States : The Lancet