

Government releases new tool that tracks environmental health impacts

Article

The news: The Biden administration rolled out the **Environmental Justice Index (EJI)**, a national tool to measure the impact of environmental factors like pollution on human health

and health equity.

How it works: The index maps which communities will suffer the most risk from environmental hazards like air pollution.

It pulls data from the Environmental Protection Agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), US Mine Safety and Health Administration, and the US Census Bureau.

- The EJI scores communities based on environmental justice and areas such as social vulnerability, environmental burden, and health vulnerability.
- For example, the index can study how an environmental factor like pollution affects people with pre-existing conditions like asthma.
- The EJI **ranks** census tracts based on 36 environmental, social, and health factors.
- For context, EJI follows a similar **[geospatial mapping tool](#)** the White House released in beta in February to identify underserved areas affected by pollution.

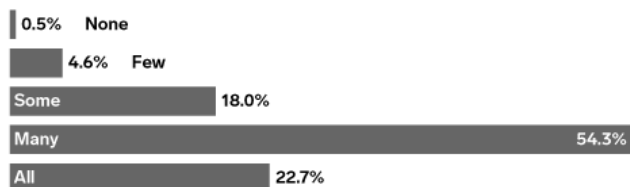
Why it matters: Health equity is a serious problem, as populations have varying access to care. Providers and payers should be able to access the government's data and gauge which areas face risk from pollution, a lack of clean water, and other environmental hazards.

- As much as **80% of a person's health outcomes** come from social determinants of health (SDOH) elements like education, nutrition, access to transportation, and the environment.
- More than **99% of physicians** said at least a few of their patients are affected by at least one social determinant, **[according to](#)** a February 2022 survey from The Physicians Foundation.

Go deeper: Check out our **[Social Determinants of Health Investments report](#)** to learn how healthcare organizations are investing in SDOH.

Share of Patient Population Affected by at Least One Social Determinant of Health According to US Physicians, Feb 2022

% of total



Note: n=1,502; the sample for this study represents the Medscape online population; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding
Source: The Physicians Foundation, "2022 Survey of America's Physicians: Part One," April 5, 2022

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