

Primary care entrants like Cityblock get insurer attention as doctors burn out trying to address SDOH

Article

The news: Social determinants of health (SDOH)-focused primary care entrant **Cityblock Health** partnered with health maintenance organization **MDwise** to expand its primary care presence to Indiana—the seventh state it now operates in.

How Cityblock works: It partners with insurers to deliver primary care, mental healthcare, and social services to primarily Medicaid and lower-income Medicare beneficiaries.

- Cityblock gives patients 24/7 virtual care access to a team including a nurse practitioner, physician, and mental health specialist.
- It matches patients with a Community Health Partner to help coordinate transportation to appointments, fill out applications, and check in throughout the care process.
- On the provider side, Cityblock partners with local community organizations (like housing organizations) to fill in any SDOH gaps.
- Plus, its platform parses through EHR data to flag any SDOH factors that could negatively impact a patient's health outcomes.

The larger trend: Most physicians think SDOH is important to address, but they simply don't have the time or resources to do this effectively.

- **Most (95%) physicians believe their patients' health outcomes are affected by SDOH like food, transportation, and housing, [per](#) an April 2022 Physicians Foundation survey.**

Awareness of the impact of SDOH doesn't mean they're easy to tackle though. The top reasons physicians say they can't address SDOH (per The Physicians Foundation) include:

- Limited amount of time during the patient visit (89%)
- A lack of workforce to direct community resources (84%)
- Difficulty accessing community resources (77%)

The big takeaway: More insurers are interested in paying for services provided by entrants like Cityblock to minimize physicians' workloads.

By partnering with an entrant like Cityblock, in-network physicians can outsource their SDOH work to community partners, rather than overextend themselves. In fact, in their attempt to address SDOH, many doctors (83%) felt burnt out, [per](#) The Physicians Foundation. For context, insurers like **Tufts Health Plan**, **CareFirst**, and **EmblemHealth** are already teamed up with Cityblock.

Importance of Select Strategies in Supporting US Physicians in Addressing Their Patients' Social Determinants of Health (SDOH), Feb 2022

% of respondents

	Very important	Somewhat important
Significantly reducing existing payer reporting requirements and other administrative burdens to provide the necessary time to help address SDOH	45%	35%
Investing in community capacity to address patients' SDOH	43%	38%
Investing in the technological and human capacity to connect patients with community resources they need to be healthy	41%	40%
Creating financial incentives for physician-directed efforts to address SDOH (e.g., SDOH screening, workforces to navigate patients to community resources)	40%	38%
Screening patients to identify social needs	38%	43%
Include SDOH in risk scoring that insurance companies use to determine patient complexity	35%	40%
Capturing standard patient-level SDOH to inform efforts to reduce health disparities	25%	45%
Capturing standard patient-level SDOH data to stratify clinical and cost-of-data purposes of risk adjustment	23%	44%
Prioritizing the shift to value-based care	23%	33%

Note: n=1,502; the sample for this study represents the Medscape online population; only "somewhat important" and "very important" responses shown
Source: The Physicians Foundation, "2022 Survey of America's Physicians: Part One," April 5, 2022

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