



NORTHWEST HEALTH
FOUNDATION

March 28, 2019

House Committee on Health Care
Oregon House of Representatives
RE: HB 3076

Chair Salinas, members of the committee:

On behalf of Northwest Health Foundation, thank you for the chance to submit my testimony about community benefit and social determinants of health, two key issues in HB 3076.

From our founding board president Senator Mark Hatfield, to our current board President Dr. Phil Wu, our foundation's commitment to advancing health for everyone in our region has been steadfast. Since our beginning in 1997, we've seen healthcare access expand to ensure nearly everyone in Oregon has the health insurance and the care they deserve.

And we've also seen the health of Oregonians worsen.

Our foundation has had to face the fact that we live in a country and a state where your life expectancy is predicted more by your zip code than your genetic code. For us, this has meant a recognition that health begins, and is shaped most powerfully, by underlying factors which are often labeled the social determinants of health. And this is where we think we have the best chance to make lasting improvements in the health of every Oregonian.

Social determinants are the primary driver of health. (See slide 2.) Yet, we invest most of our money in interventions at the individual level, whether they are for health or social needs. (See slide 3.) We know that efforts to address social needs at the individual level are necessary, but not sufficient.

When you look at combined social and healthcare spending, our peer nations are spending the same or even less as the US, yet we are the ones with health outcomes that rank towards the bottom. (See slide 4.) We're spending in the wrong places.

There's plenty we can do to shift this. Much of Oregon's transformation efforts are a recognition and response to this fact. We know there's a role that community benefit spending plays in shifting this too.

We've seen that investment in social determinants, whether at the neighborhood, city, county or state level, can impact communities' health in powerful ways. In our recent analysis of our own grantmaking in

social determinants of health from 2005 through 2013, we invested in 97 system changes that shifted, realigned or dramatically changed the built environment, institutional practices and public policies at all levels of government. These changes got at the root causes of health, improving conditions that impact whole communities.

All of this investment could have been done with community benefit dollars and indeed was supported by direct investment by Kaiser Permanente.

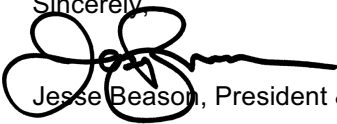
Oregon's Hospitals are critical partners in the health of Oregonians. And Northwest supports clearer charity care financial policies that span across facilities and are more widely understood by patients regardless of their language. Yet we need to look beyond charity care so ensure community benefit investments are doing great things outside the walls of hospitals.

When we look at the Community Health Needs Assessments of most of the hospitals in Oregon, they often cite investment in the Social Determinants to be a key strategy in the Community Health Improvement Plan. Yet, as their study and our own experience in Oregon shows, we lack a clear tie between the Community Health Needs Assessment and community benefit investments. Moreover, we don't have the current tracking system in place to say whether and how these community benefit investments improved the social determinants of health.

We think there's an opportunity to define social determinants in the context of community benefit and track this spending at the state level. Such an effort would give our state, our hospital partners and our community members an important tool to better align these investments and improve evaluation and impact on the health of Oregonians.

On behalf of our board, staff and community partners, we appreciate the opportunity to share our perspective about the opportunity before the committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jesse Beason', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jesse Beason, President & CEO

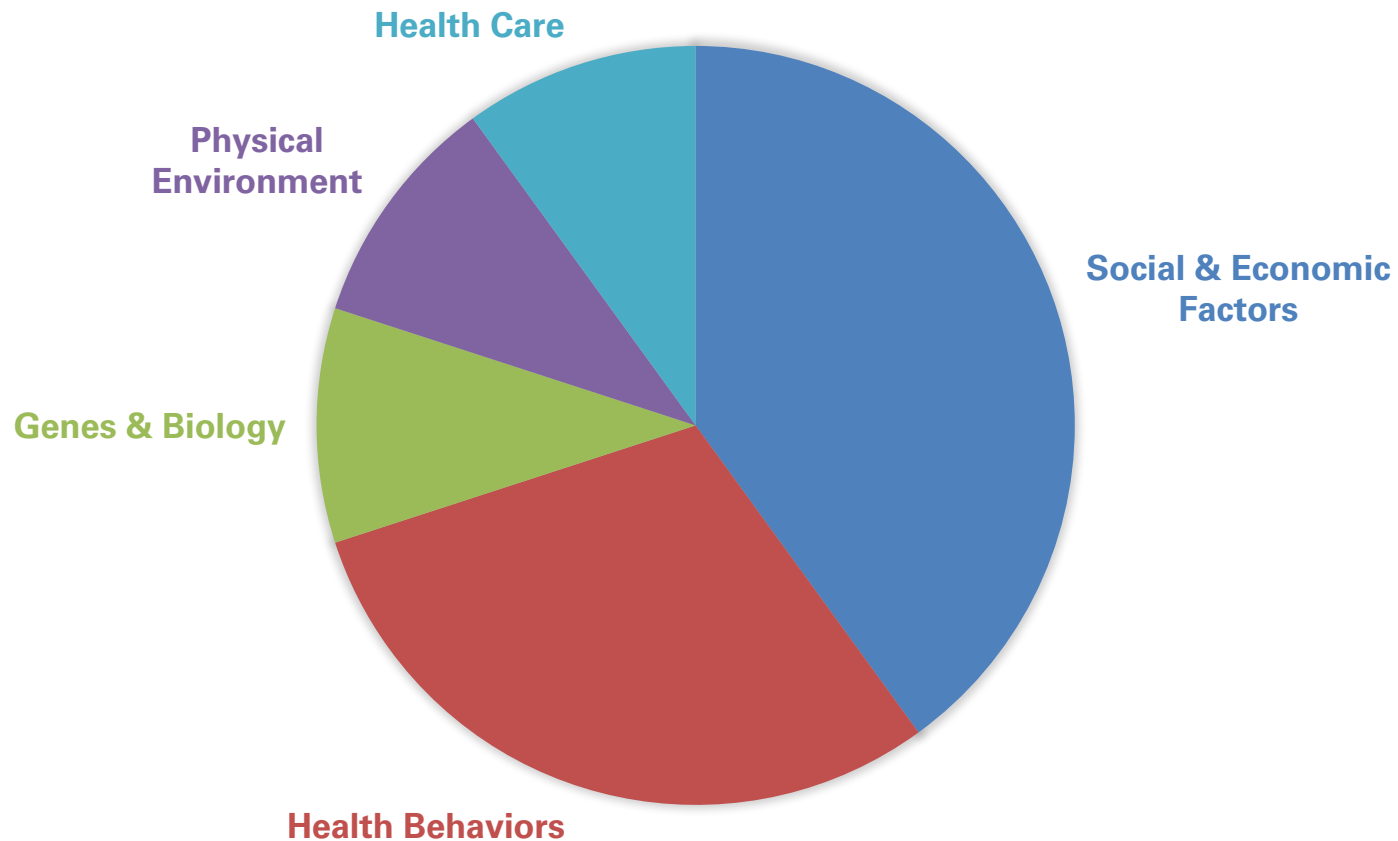


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Social Determinants & Community Benefit

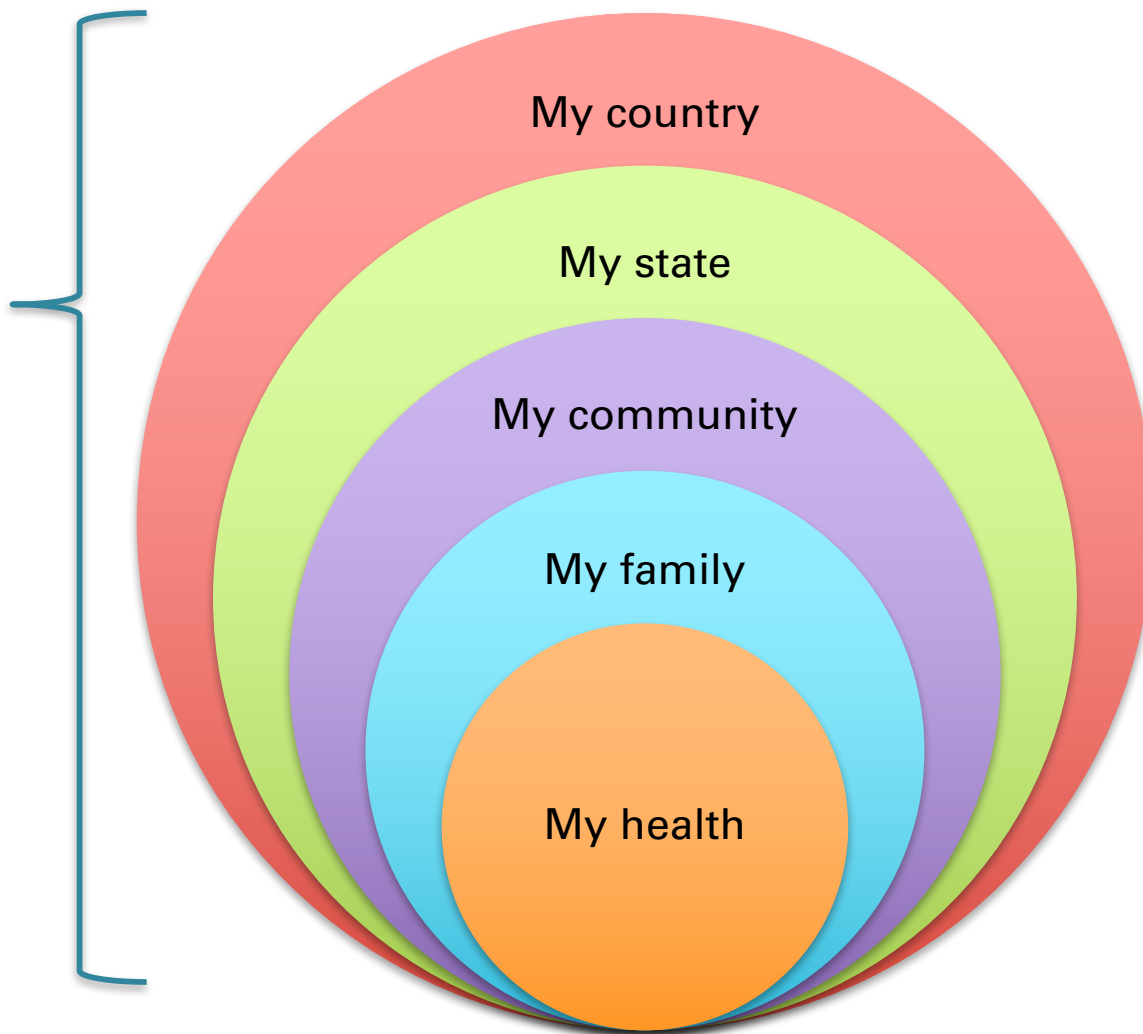
What Determines Health



Source: Tarlov AR. Public policy frameworks for improving population health. Ann NY Acad Sci 1999

Forces
Affecting
Health

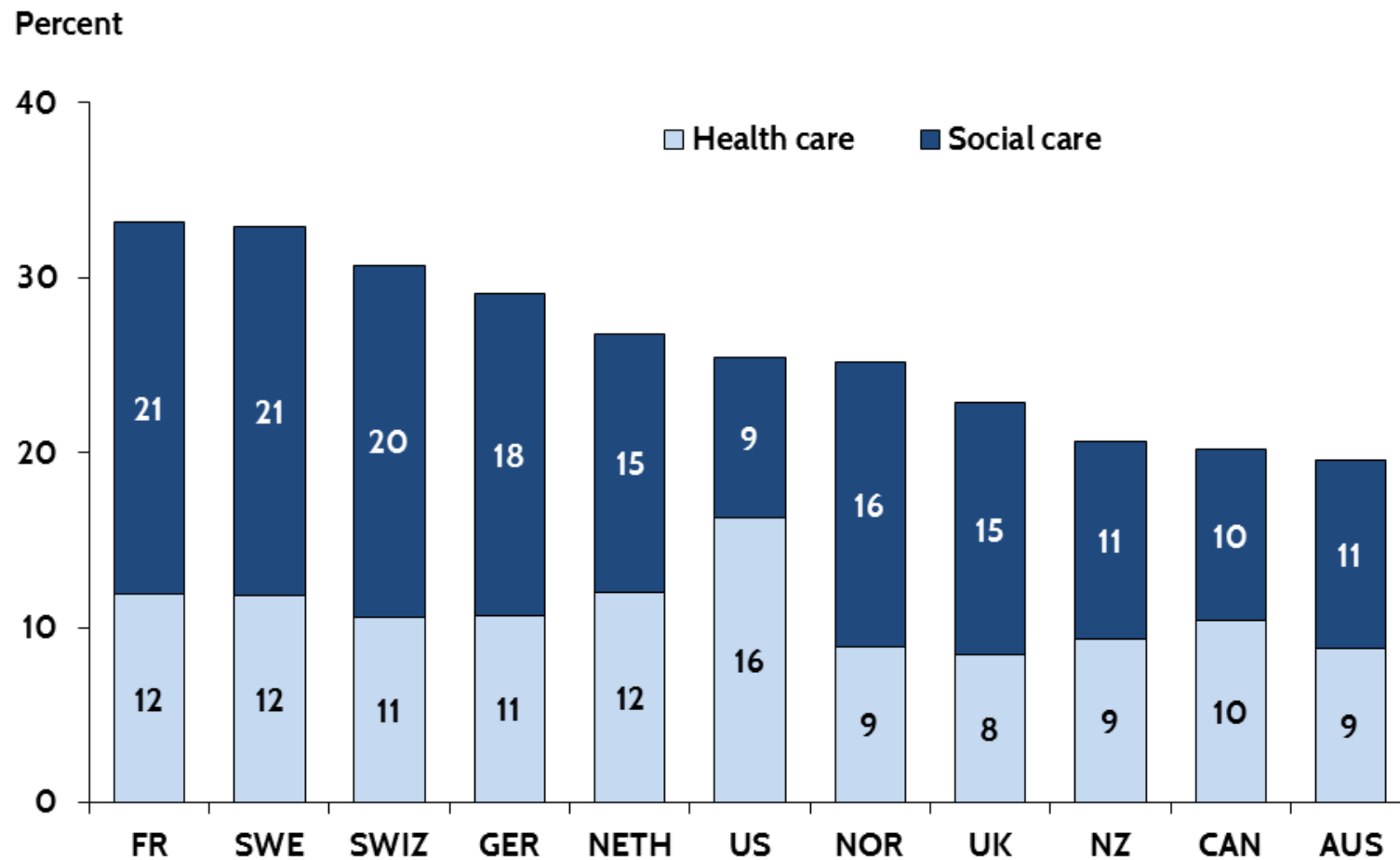
Social
Cultural
Economic



Where
changes are
most
impactful.

Where most
health
interventions
happen.

Health & Social Spending by % of GDP



Notes: GDP refers to gross domestic product.

Source: E. H. Bradley and L. A. Taylor, *The American Health Care Paradox: Why Spending More Is Getting Us Less*, Public Affairs, 2013.

