



Office of the National Coordinator  
for Health Information Technology

# ONC Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Information Exchange Activities

Thursday, October 19, 2023

Health Information Technology Advisory Committee (HITAC) Meeting

**JaWanna Henry, Branch Chief, Interoperability Systems Branch, Office of Policy, ONC**



# Agenda

- SDOH Overview
- ONC SDOH Information Exchange Areas of Alignment
- ONC SDOH Information Exchange
  - Background on ONC SDOH Information Exchange Activities
  - ONC SDOH Information Exchange Learning Forum Themes from the Community
- Looking Forward
- Questions and Discussion





# SDOH Information Exchange Project Team



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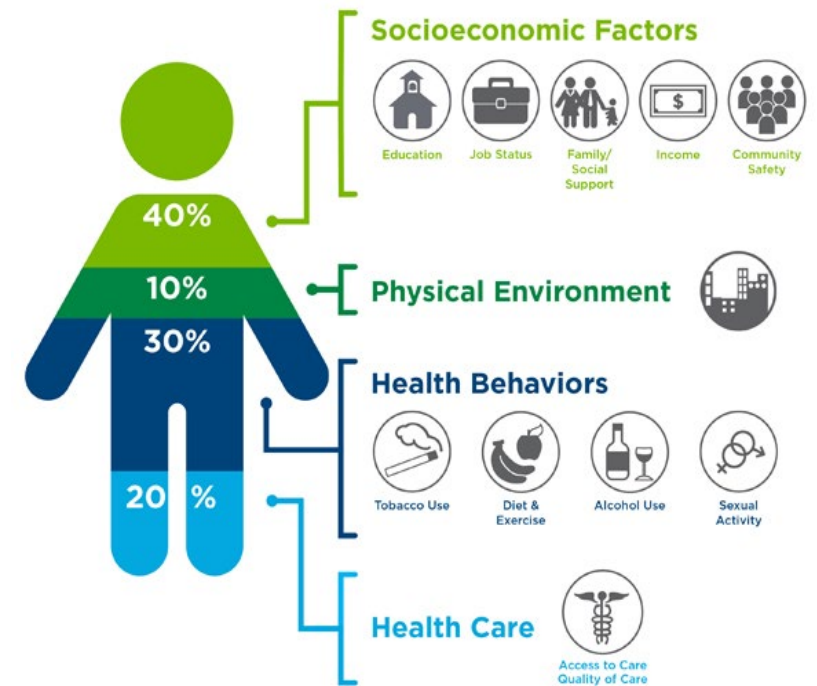
# Why Are Social Needs Important?

There is growing awareness that SDOH information improves whole person care and lowers cost. Unmet social needs negatively impact health outcomes.

- **Food insecurity** correlates to higher levels of diabetes, hypertension, and heart failure.
- **Housing instability** factors into lower treatment adherence.
- **Transportation barriers** result in missed appointments, delayed care, and lower medication compliance.

Addressing SDOH is a primary approach to achieve health equity.

## What Goes Into Your Health?



Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)

The Bridgespan Group

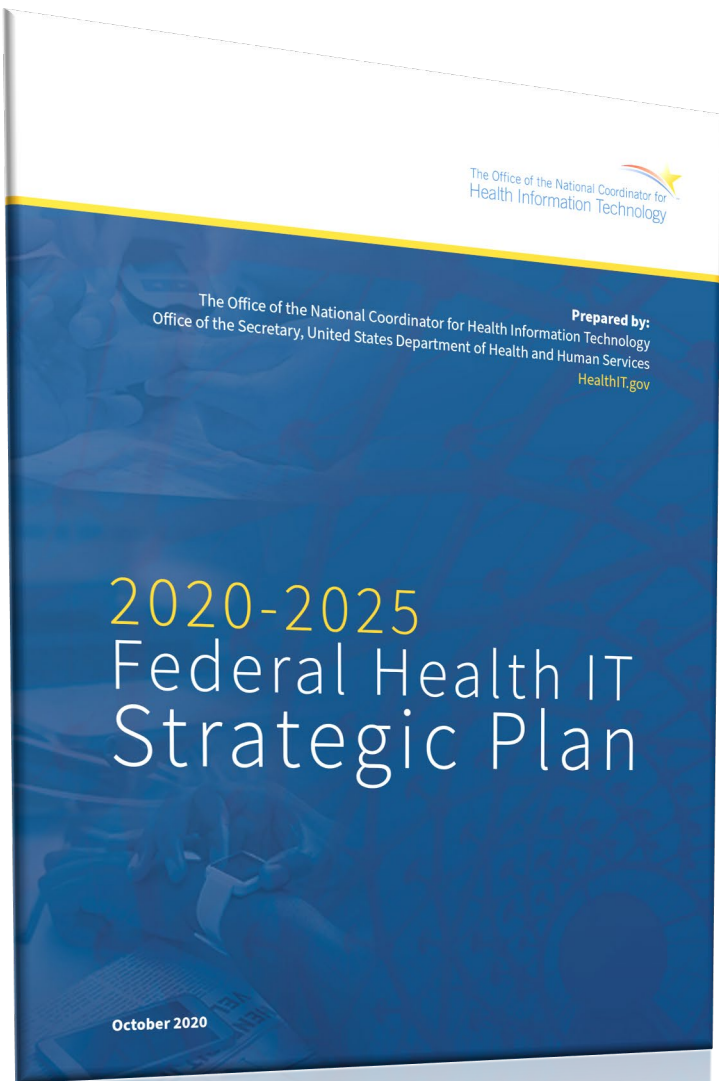
Sourced: Gravity Project

<sup>1</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/socialdeterminants/faq.html>

<sup>2</sup>[https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/public-health/the-community-cure-for-health-care-\(1\)](https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/public-health/the-community-cure-for-health-care-(1))



# **ONC SDOH Information Exchange Areas of Alignment**



GOAL 1 **Promote Health and Wellness** 

GOAL 2 **Enhance the Delivery and Experience of Care** 

GOAL 3 **Build a Secure, Data-Driven Ecosystem to Accelerate Research and Innovation** 

GOAL 4 **Connect Healthcare with Health Data** 

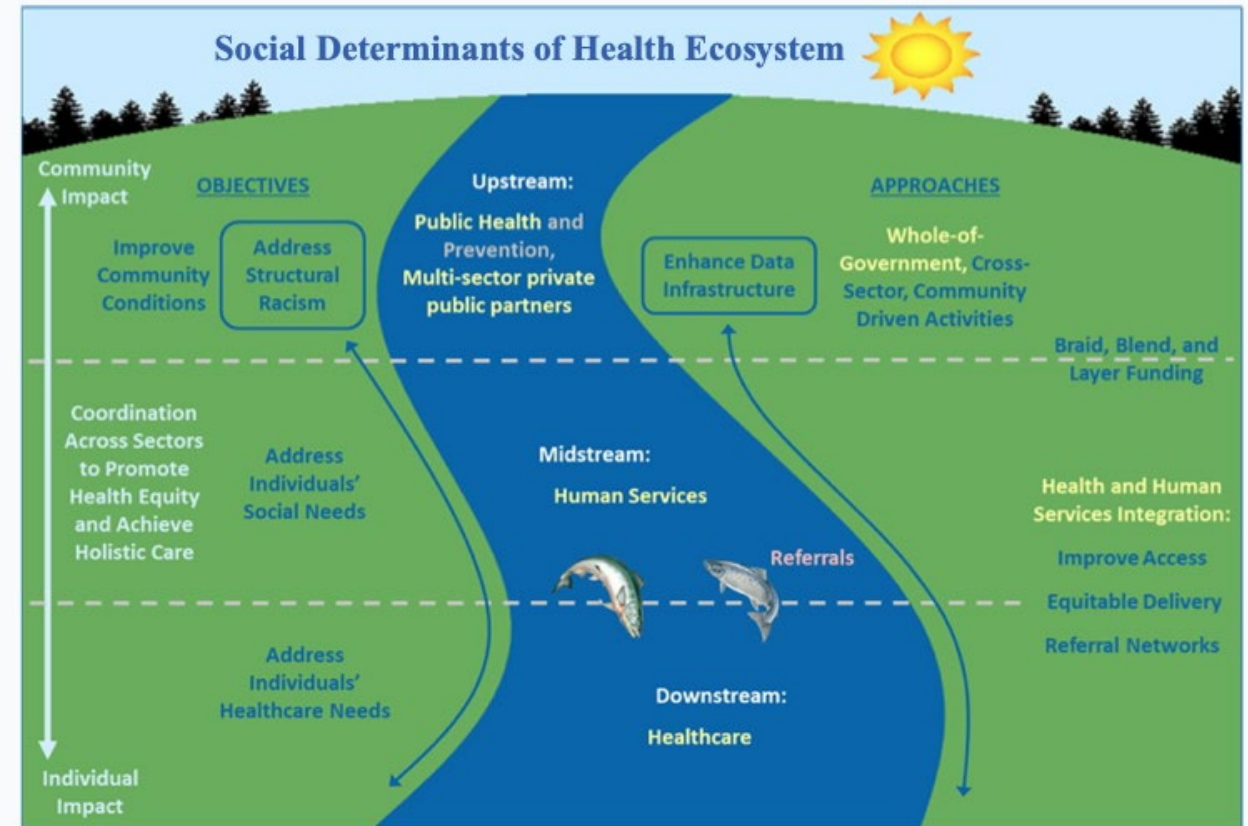
# U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

## SDOH Action Plan

**Goal 1:** Build a robust and interconnected data infrastructure to support care coordination and evidence-based policymaking.

**Goal 2:** Improve access to and affordability of equitably delivered health care services, and support partnerships between health care and human service providers, as well as, build connections with community partners to address social needs.

**Goal 3:** Adopt whole-of-government approaches, support public-private partnerships, and leverage community engagement to address SDOH and enhance population health and well-being.



**Note:** Adapted from Castrucci B, Auerbach J. Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short of Addressing Social Determinants of Health. Health Affairs Blog. January 16, 2019

# Examples of Alignment

- **White House**

- [Executive Order 13985: Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government](#)
- [National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#)
- [White House Blueprint for Addressing the Maternal Health Crisis](#)
- [Biden-Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health](#)

- **HHS**

- [2020-2025 Federal Health IT Strategic Plan](#)
- [Healthy People 2030 Framework](#)
- [HHS's Strategic Approach to addressing SDOH to Advance Health Equity](#)

- **CMS**

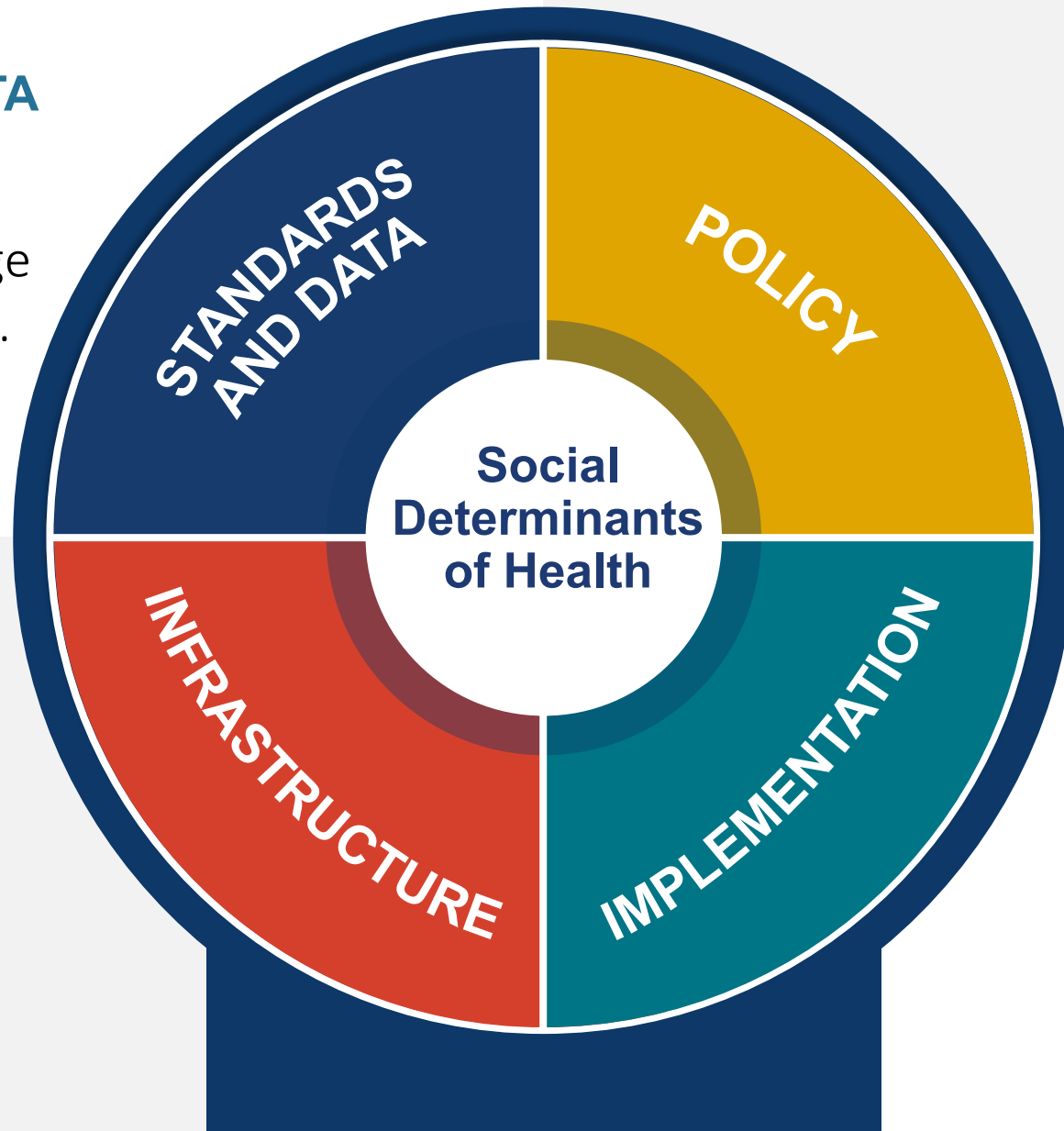
- [Framework for Health Equity 2022-2023](#)
- [Medicare Managed Care Special Needs Plans](#)





## STANDARDS AND DATA

Support for advancing SDOH data and exchange standards development. SDOH included in USCDiv4.



## POLICY

Included SDOH as a priority for the 2020-2025 Federal Health IT Strategic Plan. Adopted SDOH standards for HHS use in regulation.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Work with federal partners, states, and the health IT community on SDOH interoperability initiatives.

## IMPLEMENTATION

Developing SDOH Toolkit for SDOH information exchange initiatives including between clinical and community care providers.

# ONC Approach to Support Interoperability

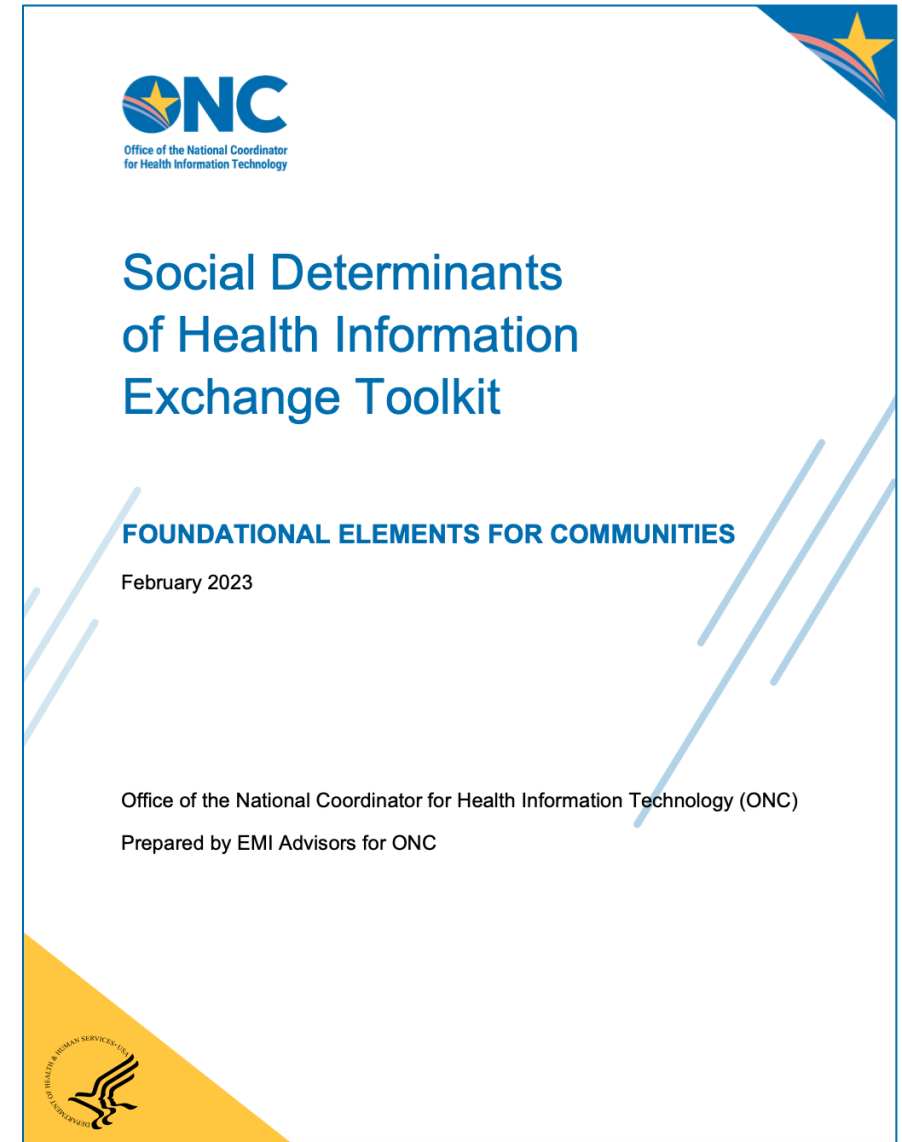


# **Background on ONC SDOH Information Exchange Activities**

# ONC SDOH Information Exchange Toolkit

Developed by ONC with support from EMI Advisors and a panel of technical experts convened in 2021.

- Provides information on the SDOH information exchange landscape to stakeholders of all experience levels.
- Identifies approaches to advance SDOH information exchange goals through the 'foundational elements' framework.
- Provides examples of common challenges and promising approaches.
- Shares guiding questions and resources to support implementers.
- Available here: [Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\) Information Exchange Toolkit](#)



# Purpose of the Toolkit

- The SDOH Information Exchange Toolkit is intended to be a practical guide that enables implementers of SDOH information exchange to learn more about the current landscape and identify key considerations and approaches to advance their goals through the consideration of important Foundational Elements.
- This Toolkit focuses on Foundational Elements for planning, implementing, and evaluating SDOH information exchange initiatives.

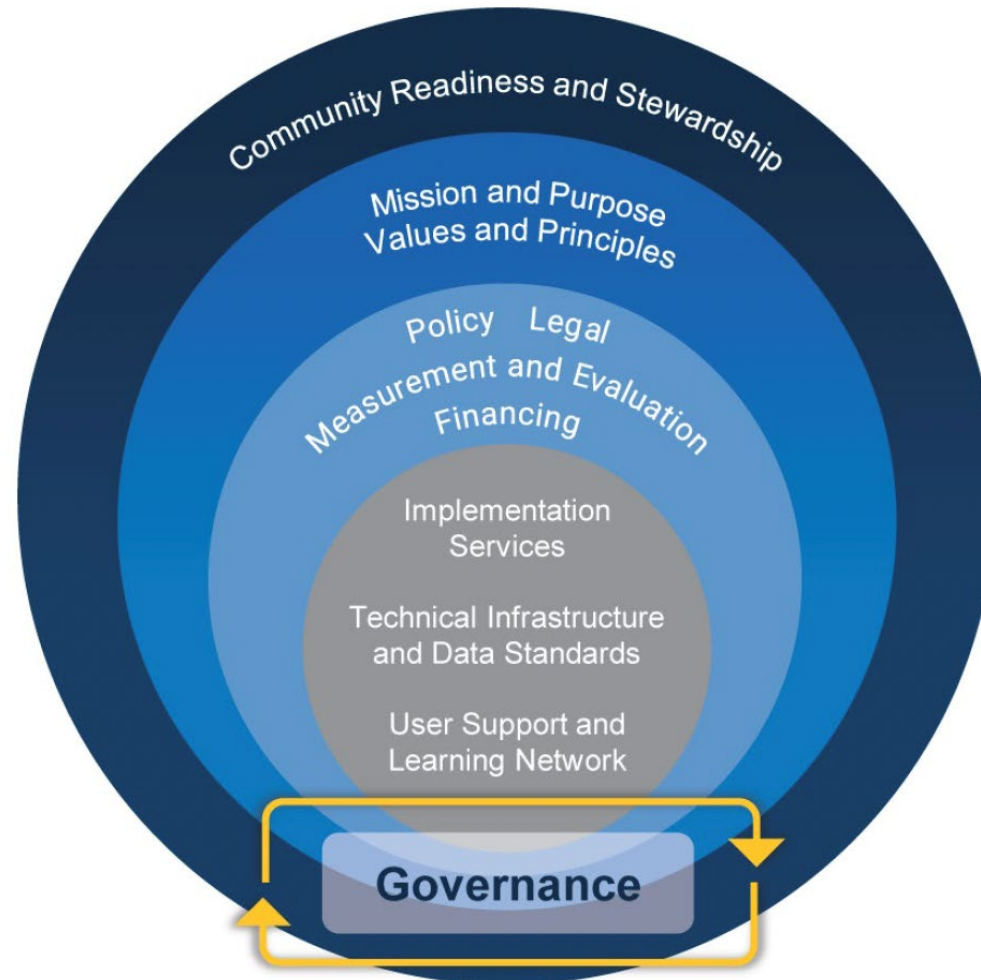
## Intended Audience:

- Community resource referral initiatives
- Government agencies
- Health information exchanges (HIEs)
- Health care provider networks
- Human services providers
- IT platform developers and managers
- Networks of community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Payers
- Policymakers
- Other health and human services entities





# Social Determinants of Health Information Exchange Foundational Elements



# Foundational Elements

**Mission and Purpose:** The intention of an initiative, ideally explicitly stated, that addresses the various value propositions of stakeholder groups, as well as the vision, scope of services, and expected benefits.

**Community Readiness and Stewardship:** Exploring the existing landscape in the geographic area and/or population of focus, assessing the capacity and willingness of the community to participate, and developing stakeholders' shared rights and responsibilities through the process of co-design, evaluation, and decision-making.

**Values and Principles:** Standards for establishing a framework for action, including ethical decision-making in pursuit of health equity.

**Financing:** Funding opportunities, sources, and plans for investments, ongoing costs, opportunities for blended approaches, and incentives for community adoption and use.

**Implementation Services:** Inclusive of technical services (e.g., defining requirements, standards specifications, and integration with existing infrastructure and services) and programmatic services (e.g., defining use cases, workflow design/redesign), as well as support for adoption and utilization by individuals and the community.



## Foundational Elements (cont.)

**Technical Infrastructure and Data Standards:** Alignment of hardware, software, data, processes, and standards to enable scalable and interoperable data and IT systems.

**Legal:** Establishing the framework of processes and operations, along with rights and obligations, to support data use and sharing and to support compliance with Federal, state, local and tribal laws.

**Policy:** Consideration of federal, state, and local policy levers to advance the ability to collect, share, and use standardized SDOH data, as well as collaboration and alignment with other relevant efforts in the community, region, and/or state for collective impact and improved outcomes.

**Measurement and Evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluation of performance metrics, individual and population outcomes, program effectiveness, and quality management and improvement.

**User Support and Learning Network:** User support and learning network activities include assessment of community challenges and needs, education, communication, training, technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning, and identification of promising practices and lessons learned.

**Governance:** Decision-making processes and groups, including as relates to institutional, administrative, and data governance.



# Learning Forum webinar series

DESCRIPTION	Meeting Date	Materials Link
<b>Phase I Webinars</b>		
Introduction to SDOH Information Exchange and the Learning Forum	March 2022	<a href="#"><u>View past meeting materials and recordings here</u></a>
Vision, Purpose, and Community Engagement	April 2022	
Governance	May 2022	
Technical Infrastructure and Interoperability	June 2022	
Policy and Funding	July 2022	
<b>Phase II Webinars</b>		
Community-level Governance	February 2023	<a href="#"><u>View past meeting materials and recordings here</u></a>
Values, Principles, and Privacy	March 2023	
Implementation, Measurement, and Evaluation	May 2023	
SDOH Information Exchange Learning Forum Summary	June 2023	





# **ONC SDOH Information Exchange Select Learning Forum Takeaways**

# Learning Forum Themes from the Community

- Community stewardship and co-designed governance are critical and resource intensive
- Standards-based, vendor-agnostic approaches to SDOH information exchange will enable interoperability
- FHIR<sup>®</sup> awareness and readiness varies
- Limited awareness and understanding of policies for data sharing with non-HIPAA covered entities



# Support Opportunities Identified by the Community

- **States:** have many SDOH information exchange activities that are considering or advancing the foundational elements framework (e.g., governance, vendor-agnostic approaches, leveraging federal funding).
- **Community-Based Organizations (CBO)/Social Care Stakeholders:** building capacity (technical, financial, human) and making technology decisions.
- **Data Service Provider (e.g. Health Information Exchanges (HIE)/Health Data Utilities (HDU):** expand current capabilities and services to support SDOH information exchange needs.
- **Implementers:** technical support and funding for standards alignment, including implementation of Gravity Project standards.
- **Health Systems and Payers:** additional information and incentives for engaging and partnering with CBOs for bi-directional information exchange without increasing provider burden.
- **Federal Partners:** ongoing coordination to further disseminate and implement the SDOH Information Exchange Toolkit and provide technical support on health IT requirements in policies and programs.



# Questions and Discussion

# Discussion Topics

- SDOH Information Exchange areas of alignment
- SDOH Information Exchange toolkit and Learning Forum takeaways
- ONC actions to advance SDOH interoperability involve:
  - Support interoperable SDOH standards adoption through the HHS Health IT Alignment Policy
  - Advance the use of the US Core Data for Interoperability Standards (USCDI)
  - Accelerate the development and use of SDOH standards and technologies to support the care landscape





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# THANK YOU!

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**<https://www.healthit.gov/form/healthit-feedback-form>**



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**<https://www.youtube.com/user/HHSONC>**

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