Q: Can supporting community development improve outcomes for the health care sector?

A: Yes!

Over 50 percent of premature deaths in the U.S. can be attributed to preventable nonmedical factors, specifically behavioral, environmental, and social conditions. Life expectancy can vary as much as 25 years in communities only a few miles apart. Through its work in areas such as affordable housing, neighborhood quality, and safety, the community development field reduces the need for many high-cost health care interventions, improving the triple bottom line—better care for more people at a more efficient cost.

---


---

By putting community development to work, health outcomes improve. Low-income adults receiving housing assistance are more likely to report better health outcomes and psychological well-being than those on waitlists. People who are stably housed are less likely than people who are homeless to visit the emergency room. If they’re admitted into the hospital, they typically have a shorter stay and are less likely to be readmitted within 30 days.

A 5 percent jump in foreclosures was linked to a 25 percent rise in suicides among middle-aged homeowners. A 5 percent jump in foreclosures was linked to a 25 percent rise in suicides among middle-aged homeowners.

---

The Answer is for you to use. Please distribute freely for noncommercial purposes as long as Shelterforce’s credit remains on it and you let us know how you used it by emailing theanswer@nhi.org. You can also download a PDF to print at bit.ly/SF189TheAnswer. What do you find yourself explaining over and over? Send suggestions for The Answer to theanswer@nhi.org.