



[Workers' Comp](#)

# Examining Social Determinants of Health

April 13, 2020

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## The Whole Person Approach

In the last five years terms such as advocacy, engagement, coaching, and even “whole-person approach” have been much talked about within workers’ compensation — for good reason. The discussion around a whole-person approach generates a number of important questions. For one, how do we support the whole person by offering one comprehensive solution? And what part do digital health programs play in meeting the needs of injured workers? Further, how do we deliver a personalized experience and meet injured workers where they are in their journey to recovery? Social determinants of health are a big part of the answer to any of these questions. According to the nonprofit Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 80 percent of health outcomes are determined by non-clinical factors. Given that, it only makes sense to examine the social determinants of health and their impact on recovery and return-to-work. As we do this, we should look for ways to align our care-management approach to identify and address non-medical barriers.

## We’ve always known social determinants are important

For case managers, it is hard to ignore social determinants of health even if they haven’t always applied that term to what they’re observing. Case managers get to know the injured worker and their families on a more intimate level. They can help ensure clinical programs avoid the pitfalls of treating the primary diagnosis only. Instead, they can look at the whole person and identify those social determinants of health that might be impeding recovery. The following factors have been identified as social determinants of health:

## Get to know workers by knowing what’s affecting them

Meeting workers where they are and understanding the challenges they face gives us the best chance at helping them achieve the best-possible outcomes. If we have deeper knowledge of the circumstances that surround injured workers, we can intervene in ways that are more impactful. Most injured workers will appreciate that we’re showing interest in their circumstances. Beyond knowing about the hurdles that might be present, it’s important for workers to simply know we want to know. Understanding the social determinants of health affecting workers is crucial to understanding workers and to seeing their path to recovery. To learn more, download our latest white paper: [Social Determinants of Health Drive Outcomes and Costs for Injured Workers](#).



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