Social Determinants of Health

According to the County Health Rankings model of the modifiable determinants of health, health care and health behavior only account for 50% of a person’s health status. Wisconsin PRAMS is one of the few sources of population data on social determinants of health.

Social and economic factors have a substantial effect on the health outcomes of Wisconsin women. For that reason, it’s necessary to develop and implement policies that tackle people’s everyday needs to reduce health disparities and promote health equity at the same time.

What other areas besides health care and health behavior have an impact on a person’s health?

Education

Education has lifelong impacts on health and wellbeing. It is linked to healthy behaviors, improved health outcomes, and longer life expectancy. About 10% of Wisconsin women who recently gave birth have less than a high school diploma.

Employment

Employment can provide a foundation for maintaining good health. Stable employment allows people to live in healthier neighborhoods, buy nutritious food, and provide quality education. Approximately one quarter of Wisconsin women are impacted by unstable employment.

- Unemployed during pregnancy: 24%
- Mother or their partner lost their job in 12 months prior to new baby’s birth: 12%

Income

Lower income means people have less to spend on health care services like regular checkups and medicines as well as healthy foods.

About 1 in 6 Wisconsin women (16%) is estimated to experience economic instability (not being able to pay the bills) in the 12 months prior to giving birth.
Family and Social Support

Family and social support increase a person’s ability to cope with stress, which negatively impacts health. A support system also helps prevent mental health disorders from developing.

At least one person who could help in an emergency: 99%

Support from husband or partner in a moment of need: 90%

Community Safety

The chronic stress associated with living in unsafe areas can negatively impact health. People in unsafe neighborhoods are more likely to use alcohol and tobacco than those living in safer areas.

75% of Wisconsin mothers of infants always feel safe in their neighborhood.

About 3% of women experience intimate partner violence before or during pregnancy.

Housing and Transportation

People experiencing unstable housing are more likely to have poor health outcomes. Difficulties with transportation can prevent people from accessing the health care services they need.

An estimated 1 in 60 Wisconsin women experience homelessness in the 12 months prior to giving birth.

Less than 1% of women said lack of transportation kept them from getting prenatal care when they wanted it.

Racial Bias

Experiences of racism affect psychological and physiological health.

Among non-white women in Wisconsin, about a quarter reported experiencing racism in the 12 months prior to giving birth, though that differed by race.

Non-Hispanic black women: 23%

Women of other races: 18%

Hispanic women: 13%