
ECONOMIC MOBILITY AS A VITAL CONDITION OF HEALTH: WHY PARTNERSHIPS WITH HEALTH CARE ARE ESSENTIAL

RON DENDAS
POVERTY AND OPPORTUNITY TRAINING FORUM
APRIL 9, 2026



AGENDA

- WELCOME
- Identify the Connection Between and Relevance of Economic Mobility and Health
- Better Understand How the Healthcare System Works (or Doesn't Work for the Poor)
- Learn About the Vital Conditions of Well-Being
- Find Out What Healthcare Needs from Community Action and Others, and What CA Needs from HC
- Discuss Systems Approaches That Address Economic Mobility and Improved Health
- Strategize How We Build Stronger Links Between Social Service and Healthcare Systems

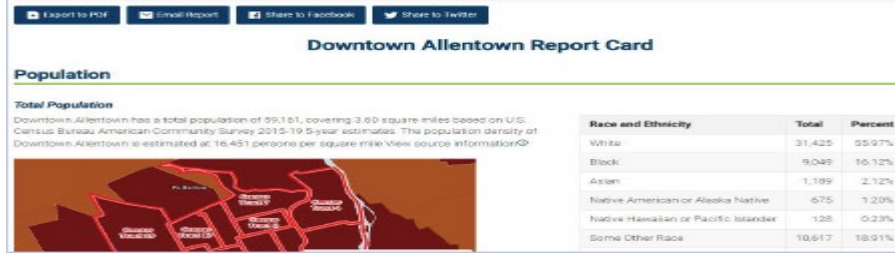


LPPIH.org Debuts New Interactive Local Data Modules

1.) Hover your mouse over "Data" on LPPIH.org and select one of the five modules



2.) View and share local data with ease



DATA



COMMUNITY



CROSS-SECTOR
PARTNERSHIPS



BACKBONE COORDINATION

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being



Belonging & Civic Muscle is at the center because it is both a vital condition and a practical capacity that is necessary for equitable success in every other kind of work.

	Sustainable resources, contact with nature, freedom from hazards Clean air, water, soil; healthy ecosystems able to sustainably provide necessary resources; accessible natural spaces; freedom from the extreme heat, flooding, wind, radiation, earthquakes, pathogens
THRIVING NATURAL WORLD	
	Basic requirements for health and safety Nutritious food, safe drinking water; fresh air; sufficient sleep; routine physical activity; safe, satisfying sexuality and reproduction; freedom from trauma, violence, addiction and crime; routine care for physical and behavioral health
BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH + SAFETY	
	Humane, consistent housing Adequate space per person; safe structures; affordable costs; diverse neighborhoods (without gentrification, segregation, concentrated poverty); close to work, school, food, recreation, and nature
HUMANE HOUSING	
	Rewarding work, careers, and standards of living Job training/retraining; good-paying and fulfilling jobs; family and community wealth; savings and limited debt
MEANINGFUL WORK + WEALTH	
	Continuous learning, education, and literacy Continuous development of cognitive, social, emotional abilities; early childhood experiences; elementary, high school, and higher education; career and adult education
LIFELONG LEARNING	
	Reliable, safe, and accessible transportation Close to work, school, food, leisure; safe transport; active transport; efficient energy use; few environmental hazards
RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION	
	Sense of belonging and power to shape a common world Social support; civic association; freedom from stigma, discrimination, oppression; support for civil rights, human rights; civic agency; collective efficacy; vibrant arts, culture, and spiritual life; equitable access to information; many opportunities for civic engagement (voting, volunteering, public work)
BELONGING + CIVIC MUSCLE	

Families First
in Franklin Park

JOIN US
FOR UPCOMING EVENTS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

Franklin Park Community Garden
on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm
Ripple Church at St. Stephen's
1421 W Turner Street

Join us at our Franklin Park Community Meetings!
2nd Thursday of every month from 6-8:30pm
Ripple Church at St. Stephen's
1421 W Turner Street

City of Allentown Movie in the Park!
Watch Paw Patrol at Franklin Park!
May 3, 2024 at dusk

Ripple Church Worship Service
Every Sunday at 4pm
1421 W Turner Street

Uplift After-School Program
Tuesday's/Thursday's 3-5 pm starting April 23 at Ripple Church
This is an exciting after-school program for K-5th grade! We will have monthly themes, offer homework help, have guest speakers, activities, dinner and more!

Community Health Fair
June 1, 2024 | PPL Center | 1-4 pm
Valley Health Partners 2nd Annual Community Health Fair offers community resources, connections to jobs, family fun, food, games, music and more!

Fine Feather's Excelsior Summer Camp
June 7 - August 8 from 9am - 3pm
Registration available at finefeatherfoundation.org

Family Block Party!
May 18, 2024 | 11am - 2pm
Free food, Free raffle prizes and activities for all ages!
Pinebrook Family Answers
402 N Fulton Street

Family Needs Assessment | United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley
The United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley is seeking input from all families in the Franklin Park area! Please contact Ashley Norkus at ashleyn@unitedwayglv.org if interested

[facebook.com/familiesfirstinf](https://www.facebook.com/familiesfirstinf) [instagram.com/familiesfirstinf](https://www.instagram.com/familiesfirstinf)
[linkedin.com/familiesfirstinf](https://www.linkedin.com/company/familiesfirstinf) [cscinc.org/fffp](https://www.cscinc.org/fffp)



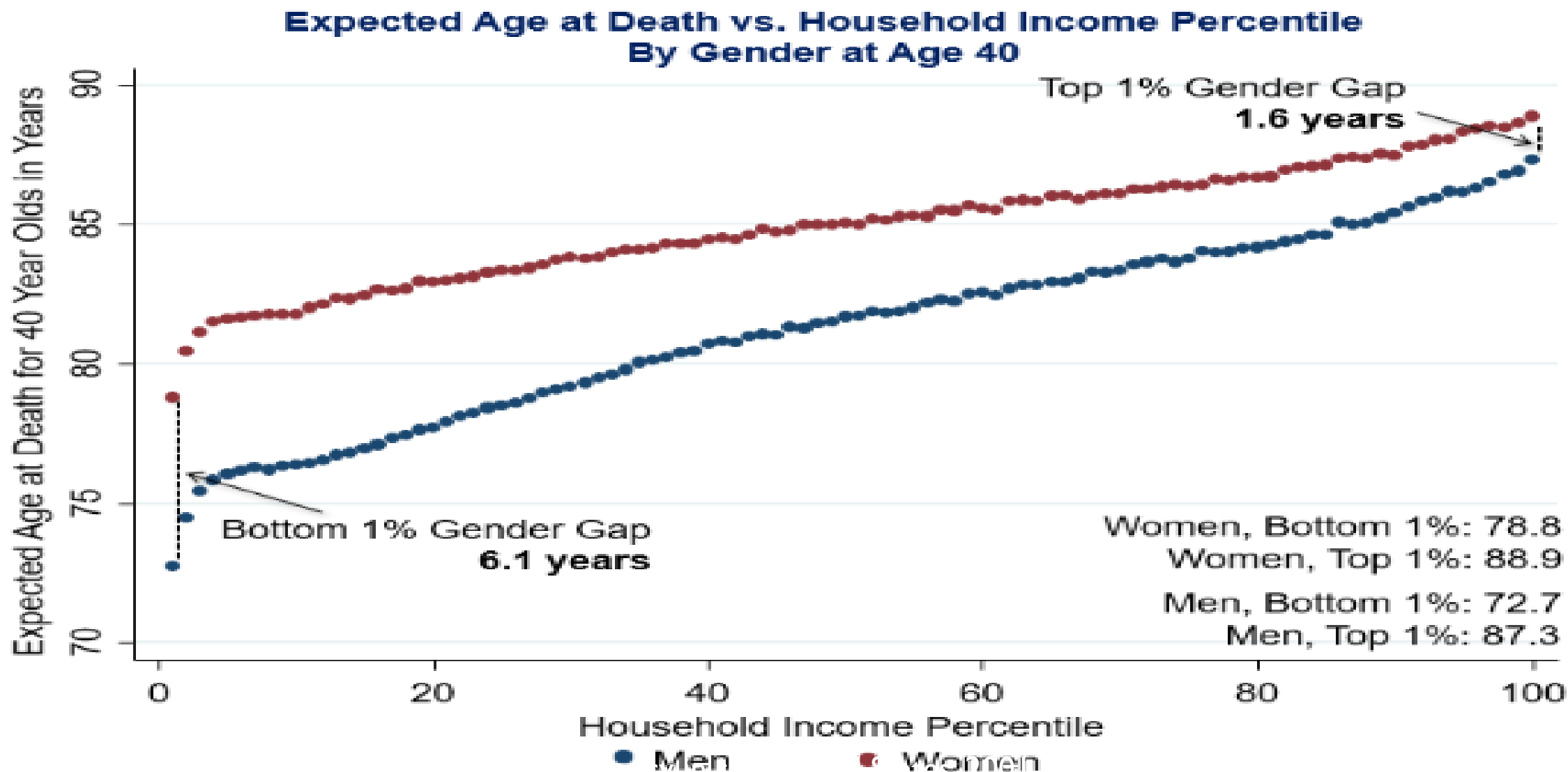
Allentown Works Launches with \$20M Federal Funding

The program focuses on residents in the Franklin Park, Center City, and 1st & 6th Ward neighborhoods, providing job training, childcare support, and improved transportation access to help remove barriers to employment



Poor people are at greater risk of ill health....
and ill health increases the likelihood of being
poor.





Vital Conditions for Health and Well-Being



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THRIVING NATURAL WORLD

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Clean air, water, soil; healthy ecosystems able to sustainably provide necessary resources; accessible natural spaces; freedom from the extreme heat, flooding, wind, radiation, earthquakes, pathogens



BASIC NEEDS FOR HEALTH + SAFETY

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Nutritious food, safe drinking water; fresh air; sufficient sleep; routine physical activity; safe, satisfying sexuality and reproduction; freedom from trauma, violence, addiction and crime; routine care for physical and behavioral health



HUMANE HOUSING

Humane, consistent housing

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MEANINGFUL WORK + WEALTH

Rewarding work, careers, and standards of living

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LIFELONG LEARNING

Continuous learning, education, and literacy

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RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION

Reliable, safe, and accessible transportation

Close to work, school, food, leisure; safe transport; active transport; efficient energy use; few environmental hazards



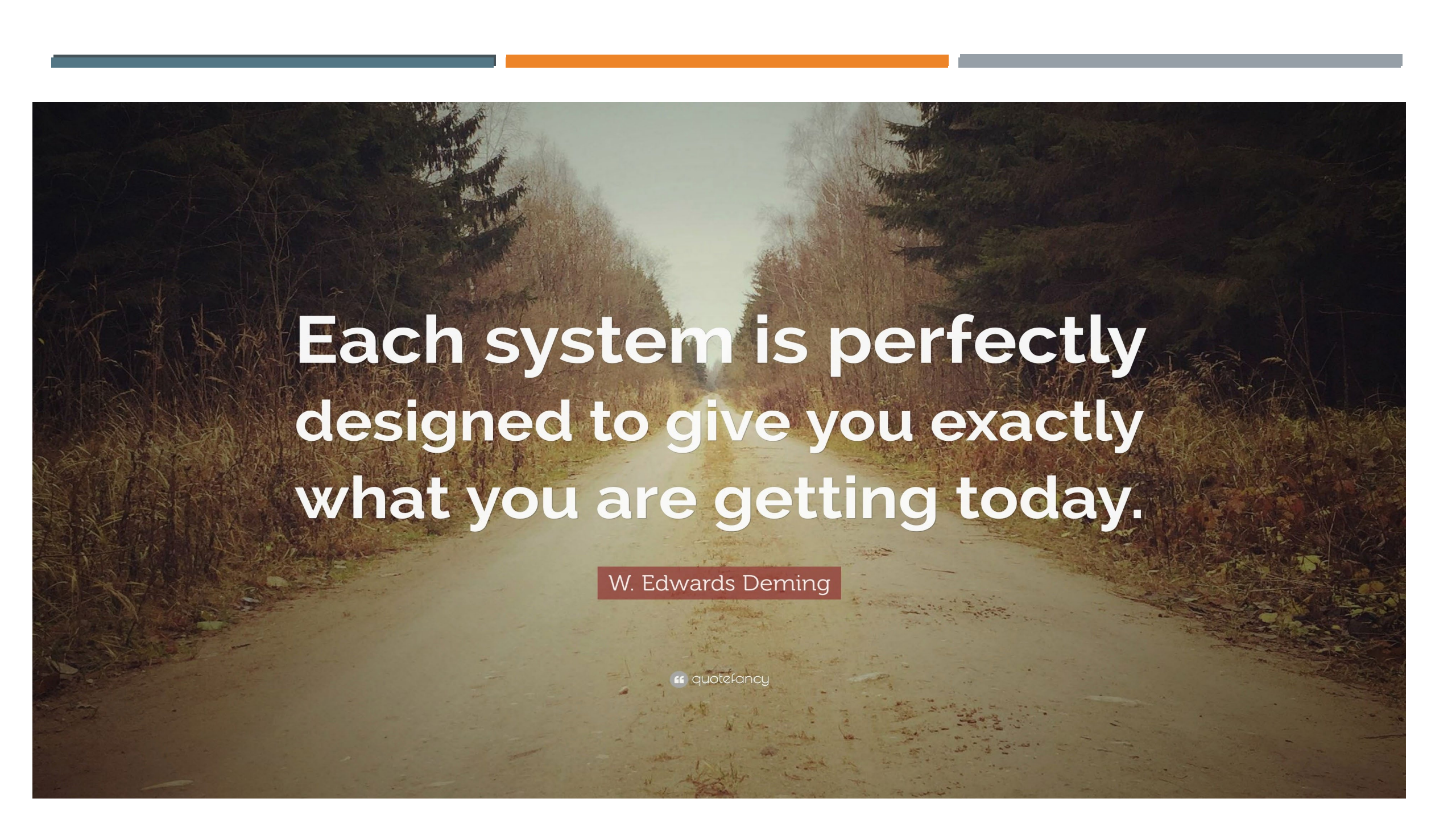
BELONGING + CIVIC MUSCLE

Sense of belonging and power to shape a common world

Social support; civic association; freedom from stigma, discrimination, oppression; support for civil rights, human rights; civic agency; collective efficacy; vibrant arts, culture, and spiritual life; equitable access to information; many opportunities for civic engagement (voting, volunteering, public work)

A social system is a network of people, roles, institutions, norms, and relationships that interact in patterned ways and reliably produce certain outcomes in a community or society. What makes it a system is that the interactions—not any single person—create the results we see.



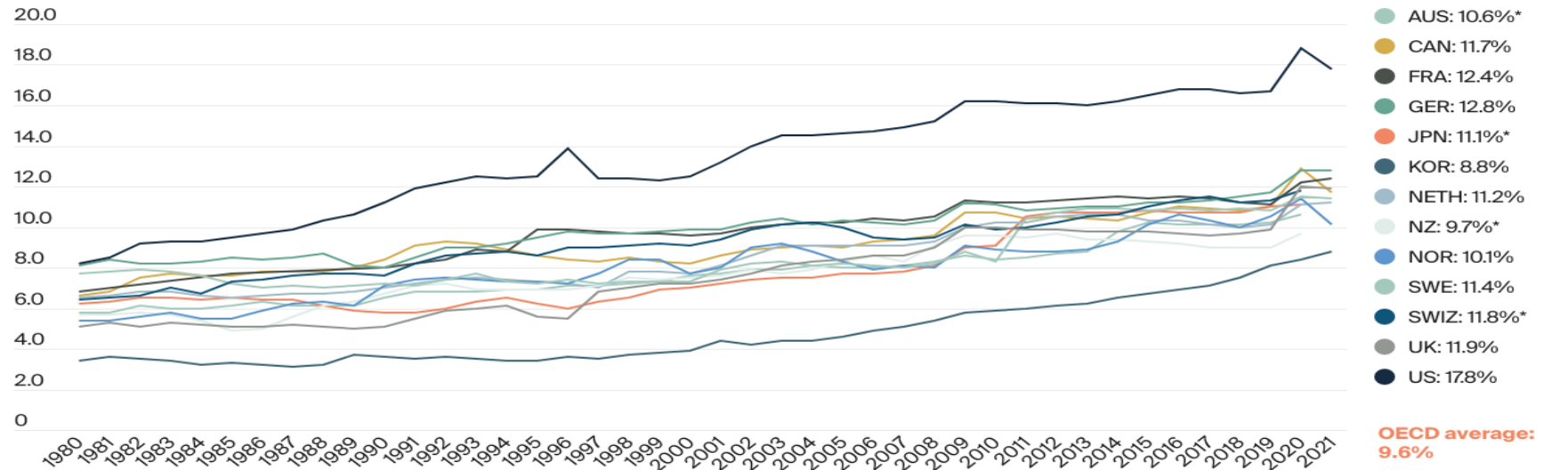


**Each system is perfectly
designed to give you exactly
what you are getting today.**

W. Edwards Deming

The U.S. is a world outlier when it comes to health care spending.

Percent of GDP spent on health, 1980–2021*



[Download data](#)

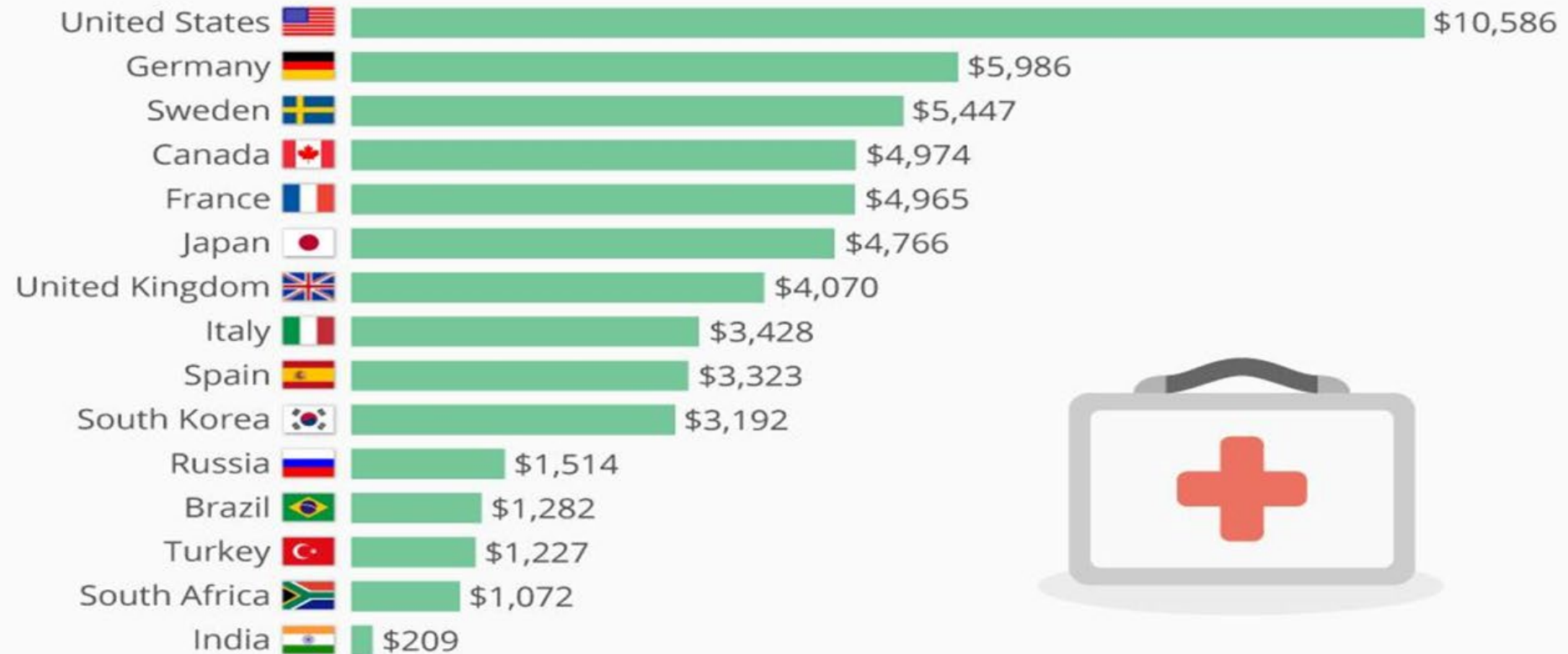
Notes: * 2020 data. Current expenditures on health for all functions by all providers for all financing schemes. Data points reflect share of gross domestic product. Based on System of Health Accounts methodology, with some differences between country methodologies. GDP = gross domestic product. OECD average reflects the average of 38 OECD member countries, including ones not shown here.

Data: OECD Health Statistics 2022.

Source: Munira Z. Gunja, Evan D. Gumas, and Reginald D. Williams II, *U.S. Health Care from a Global Perspective, 2022: Accelerating Spending, Worsening Outcomes* (Commonwealth Fund, Jan. 2023). <https://doi.org/10.26099/8ejy-yc74>

The U.S. Has The Most Expensive Healthcare System

Per capita health expenditure in selected countries in 2018

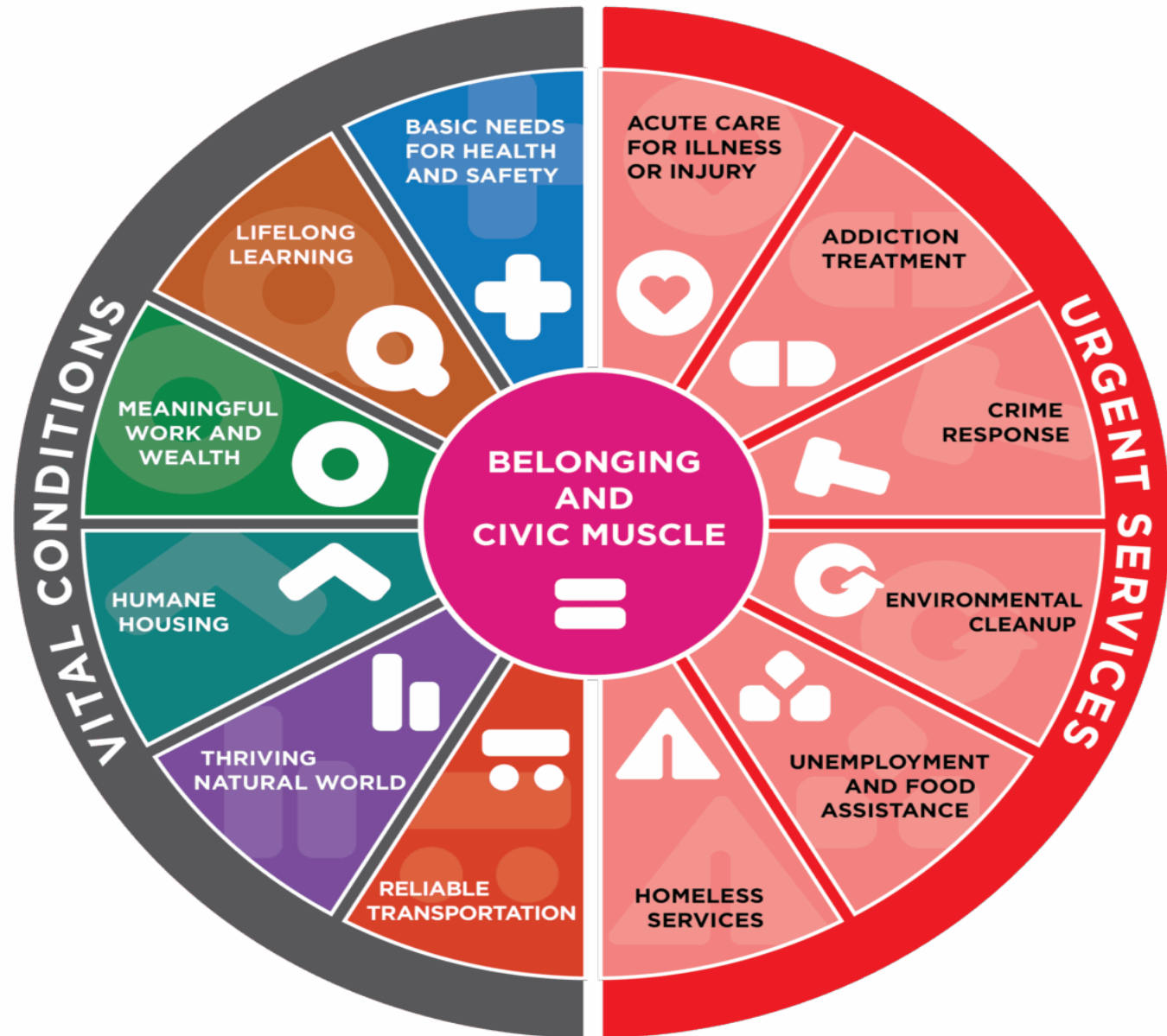


MIRROR, MIRROR 2024: A Portrait of the Failing U.S. Health System: Comparing Performance in 10 Nations- David Blumenthal, Evan D. Gumas,Arnav Shah, Munira Z. Gunja, Reginald D.Williams II

	AUS	CAN	FRA	GER	NETH	NZ	SWE	SWIZ	UK	US
OVERALL RANKING	1	7	5	9	2	4	6	8	3	10
Access to Care	9	7	6	3	1	5	4	8	2	10
Care Process	5	4	7	9	3	1	10	6	8	2
Administrative Efficiency	2	5	4	8	6	3	7	10	1	9
Equity	1	7	6	2	3	8	—	4	5	9
Health Outcomes	1	4	5	9	7	3	6	2	8	10

A man with a beard and a yellow t-shirt is shown from the chest up. He has a confused expression, with wide eyes and a hand on his chin. The background is a solid teal color with several large, stylized yellow question marks scattered around him. The text 'WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR HEALTHCARE SYSTEM?' is written in white, uppercase letters on the right side of the image.

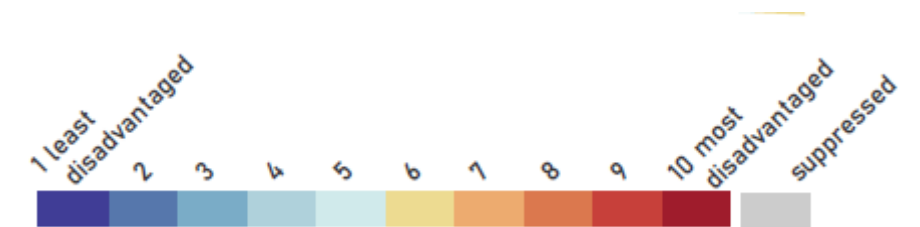
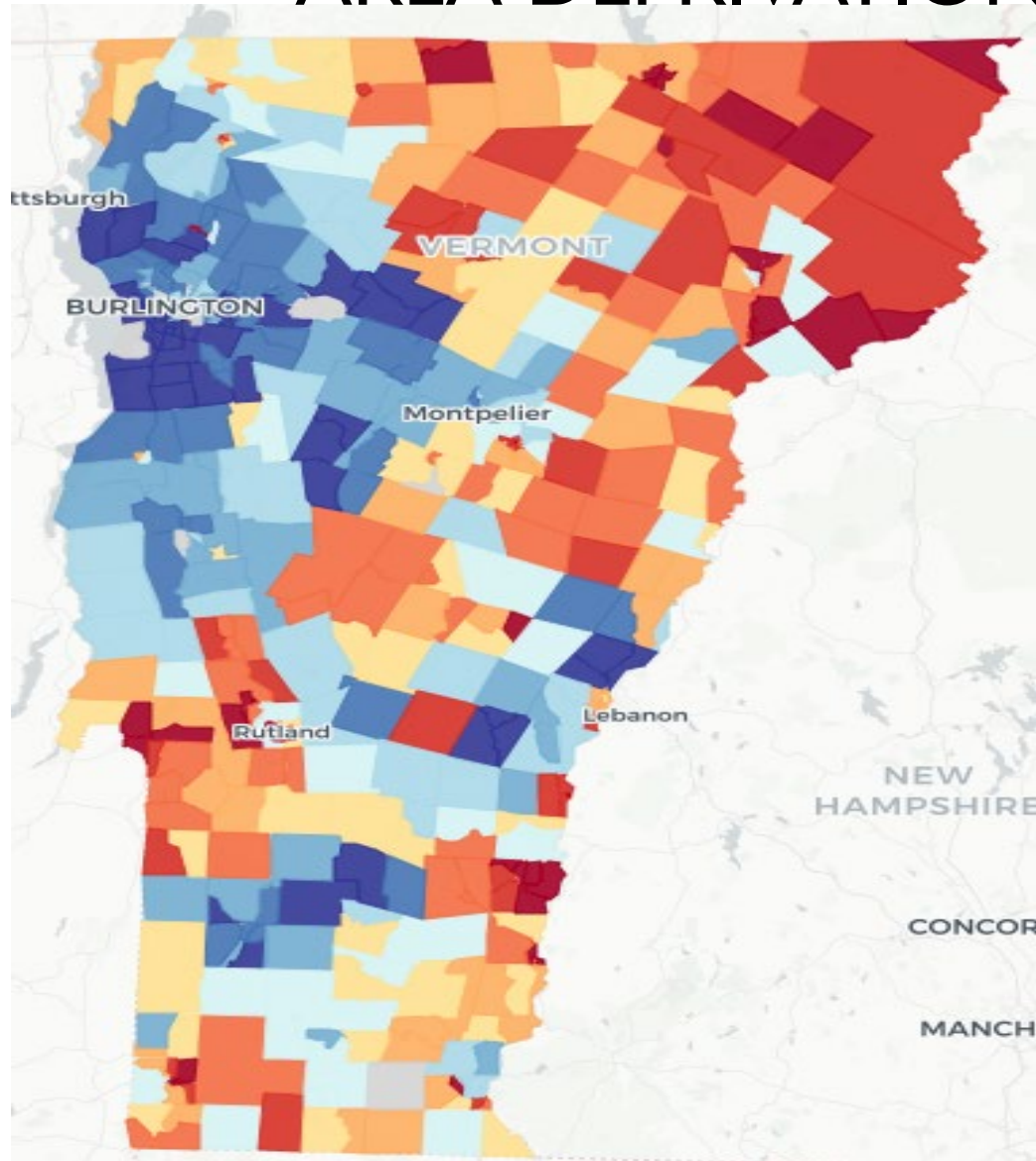
WHAT'S WRONG
WITH OUR
HEALTHCARE
SYSTEM?



AREA DEPRIVATION INDEX (ADI)

DOMAINS	METRICS
EDUCATION	% of population aged 25 years or older with less than 9 years of education
	% of population aged 25 years or older with at least a high school diploma
	% of employed population aged 16 years or older in white-collar occupations
INCOME/EMPLOYMENT	Median family income in US dollars
	Income disparity
	% of families below federal poverty level
	% families below 150% of federal poverty level
	% population below 150% of federal poverty level
	% civilian labor force population aged 16 and older who are unemployed
HOUSING	Median home value in US dollars
	Median gross rent in US dollars
	Median monthly mortgage in US dollars
	% of owner-occupied housing units
	% of occupied housing units without complete plumbing
HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS	% of single parent households with children younger than 18
	% of households without a motor vehicle
	% of households without a telephone
	% of households with more than 1 person per room

AREA DEPRIVATION INDEX FOR VERMONT





KEY COMPONENTS TO SYSTEMS CHANGE:

- ❖ DATA FOR DISCOVERY
- ❖ CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS
- ❖ AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- ❖ BACKBONE COORDINATION



ACTION:

HOW DO WE IMPACT HEALTH AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY?

1. Know Your History
2. Understand Healthcare's Mandates to Health Improvement
3. Use Local Data For Discovery
4. Stewardship/Cross Sector Partnerships
5. Authentic Community Participation
6. Strategy, Not Programs- Complex Problem Solving



2. HEALTHCARE'S MANDATE FOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

- Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Community Health Needs Assessments
- Community Health Improvement Plans
- Community Benefit
- Act 68 (2024): Health Care Payment and Delivery System Reform
- S.126 (2025): Hospital Cost Stabilization and Medicare-Based Price Regulation



HOW HEALTHCARE NEEDS TO MOVE FORWARD

- Approach community health as a strategic imperative and investment in the future, not as a charitable silo to fulfill IRS requirements
- Invest in vital conditions in addition to urgent services
- Mobilize a full range of financial and non-financial assets toward vital conditions
- Collaborate with community partners and residents

3. USE LOCAL DATA FOR DISCOVERY



WWW.SPARKMAP.ORG

Make a Community Needs Assessment - SparkMap

4. STEWARDSHIP/CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION



5. AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



IAP2's Spectrum of Public Participation was designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines the public's role in any public participation process. The Spectrum is used internationally, and it is found in public participation plans around the world.

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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6. STRATEGY, NOT PROGRAMS- COMPLEX PROBLEM SOLVING

Simple, Complicated and Complex Problems		
SIMPLE	COMPLICATED	COMPLEX
Baking a Cake	Sending a Rocket to the Moon	Raising a Child
The recipe is essential.	Rigid protocols or formulas are needed.	Rigid protocols have a limited application or are counter-productive.
Recipes are tested to assure easy replication.	Sending one rocket increases the like lihood that the next will also be a success.	Raising one child provides experience but is no guarantee of success with the next.
No particular expertise is required, but experience increases success rate.	High levels of expertise and training in a variety of fields are necessary for success.	Expertise helps but only when balanced with responsiveness to the particular child.
A good recipe produces nearly the same cake every time.	Key elements of each rocket must be identical to succeed.	Every child is unique and must be understood as an individual.
The best recipes give good results every time.	There is a high degree of certainty of outcome.	Uncertainty of outcome remains.
A good recipe notes the quantity and nature of the "parts" needed and specifies the order in which to combine them, but there is room for experimentation.	Success depends on a blueprint that directs both the development of separate parts and specifies the exact relationship in which to assemble them.	Can't separate the parts from the whole; essence exists in the relationship between different people, different experiences, different moments in time.
Source: Westley, F., B. Zimmerman and M. Q. Patton, 2006, <i>Getting to Maybe: How the World is Changed</i> .		



WHAT CAN COMMUNITY ACTION AND OTHER
SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES DO TO **CREATE**
CONDITIONS WHERE ALL PEOPLE THRIVE, IN
ADDITION TO THE IMPORTANT URGENT SERVICES
YOU PROVIDE?

THANK YOU

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