“Health Is More than Health Care”

“How will it affect health care?” The rise in health care costs nationally and for individuals and frustration with our health care system may necessitate asking this question of every policy, from decisions to build roads to increased military spending and beyond.

Public health is impacted by factors outside the health care system. The link between higher levels of education and better health has long been known. Life expectancy also rises with income. These factors are identified among social determinants of health.
“Social determinants of health are conditions in the environments in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks,” according to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion’s Healthy People 2020 initiative.

Many responses to the high cost of health care in the United States focus on changing individual health behaviors, but other factors, such as where you live, affect your health. Social determinates contribute one-fifth of the risk of premature death.

The Centers for Disease Control lists five social determinants of health, each with key issues. The determinants are:

- Economic stability;
- Education;
- Social and community context;
- Health and health care;
- Neighborhood and built environment.

Outcomes are very different in neighborhoods with differing levels of housing stability, educational quality, health care access, etc. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention listed location as a stronger predictor of premature death from heart disease than genetics. The lack of consistent social supports results in geographic disparities.

The United States spends much more on health care than do other developed countries. It has some of the most advanced health care technology and research. Yet, it scores lower on public
health outcomes. The United States is unique among developed countries in lacking universal health care, and it is generally accepted by health care experts this contributes to its low ranking.

The Commonwealth Fund, which ranks 11 predominately European, highly developed countries on health care, listed the United States last in its most recent report. This is despite spending that is two and a half times more than the No. 1 ranked country, the United Kingdom. U.S. health care costs have remained high while it has continued to languish at the bottom of the Fund’s public health rankings.

Countries with lower health care costs frequently provide their residents with many more supportive services. Many protect and promote the economic and social well-being of citizens, based on the principles of equal opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth and public responsibility for citizens with challenges preventing them from achieving a good life.


Return to Table of Contents.

World Bank: Human Capital Paves the Way to Prosperity

The United States was ranked 24th in the world by the World Bank based on investments in human capital. The 2018 study used levels of education and health care as measurements of a commitment to economic growth.

“Human capital consists of the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society, said the World Bank president. We can end extreme poverty and create more inclusive societies by developing human capital. This requires investing in people through nutrition, health care, quality education, jobs and skills.”

The World Bank says a child born in the United States today will be 76 percent as productive when she or he grows up compared to productivity of a child with a complete education and full health. This places this child in the 8 percent of the world’s children who will grow up to be more than 75 percent as productive as they could be.

The human capital index measures the amount of human capital a child born today can expect to attain by age 18. It is based on five measures that have been linked directly to productivity:

- Child survival (to age 5);
- School enrollment;
Quality of learning;
Healthy growth;
Adult survival.

“Researchers found that nations with greater improvements in human capital also tend to have faster growth in per capita GDP [gross domestic product],” according to the World Bank.

Improving success in the world, its nations, communities and individuals requires investing in people through nutrition, health care, quality education, jobs and skills. These efforts end extreme poverty and expand opportunities for all.


Return to Table of Contents.

Protecting Health By Protecting the Community Earth

The federal Healthy People 2020 initiative defines environmental health as prevention of or controlling disease, injury and disability related to interactions between people and their environment. It highlights six elements of environmental health:

1. Outdoor air quality;
2. Surface and ground water quality;
3. Toxic substances and hazardous wastes;
4. Homes and communities;
5. Infrastructure and surveillance;

The Organization of Economic and Community Development includes exposure to air pollution in its measure of well-being in the countries it maintains data on.

The World Health Organization found approximately one in four deaths globally was due to preventable environmental factors. As our world heats, this number could rise. The increase in catastrophic weather events also challenges health.

Vulnerable people, including very young children, are most at risk.


Return to Table of Contents.
While the appeal to a Texas judge's ruling striking down the Affordable Care Act processes, it may be useful to consider how the law affects all of us. By expanding the percentage of insured people, especially, as originally implemented, including requiring younger, healthier citizens to pay into the system, the law laid the ground work for lower premiums for all insured people because access to health care coverage means people can get health care maintenance and treatment before problems become critical. All insured people may begin having to pay for preventive services, like annual physicals, if the ACA requirements to cover them end.

In addition to requiring coverage of people with pre-existing conditions, the ACA expanded coverage of youth up to age 26 under their parents' policies. Children in foster care are also covered through TennCare until age 26. The ACA created accountable care organizations based on the belief that coordination and communication among providers would improve care and reduce costs.

The U.S. Surgeon General chairs the National Prevention Council, created by the ACA and involving 20 federal agencies, to ensure the health, well-being and resilience of the American people by promoting health and preventing illness.


Second Look Commission Issues Report

The Second Look Commission (SLC), staffed by TCCY’s Craig Hargrow, has released its eighth annual report. The Second Look Commission (SLC) was created in response to the need to review and improve how Tennessee handles severe child abuse cases. Legislation creating the SLC mandated it to review Department of Children’s Services cases of children where a second or subsequent report of severe child abuse had occurred and make recommendations for the future. The SLC was created as a catalyst to facilitate improved response to severe child abuse.


Congress Reauthorizes Legislation Critical to Child Well-Being

In December, the U.S. Congress passed two major pieces of legislation, the Farm Bill, which includes funding for the Special Nutrition Assistance Program or food stamps, and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, the primary federal law regarding juvenile justice. TCCY is the OJJDP State Advisory Group for Tennessee tasked with assuring the state complies with the law’s core requirements.

Changes in the law require schools to accept credits earned in detention and states to focus on collecting and analyzing data on racial and ethnic disparities and establish a plan to address them.

In passing the Farm Bill, Congress rejected proposals that could have dropped 1.5 million people from the program. It includes increased SNAP work-training funding and mandates more support for participants, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture can keep states from receiving waivers from existing work requirements and has begun to do so.

Congress has also passed the First Step Criminal Justice Act, addressing the adult system.


Excitement is rising at TCCY as we prepare for the 2019 Children's Advocacy Days on March 12-13. Registration information will be forthcoming.

TCCY is soliciting nominations for awards to be given during the event.

The Jim Pryor Award recognizes the advocacy efforts of a professional or volunteer who is making a difference for Tennessee children.

The Youth Excellence Award honors a young person who is now giving back to the community after having had contact with juvenile court.

Prevent Child Abuse Tennessee will be bestowing the Unsung Hero Awards at the event.


TCCY Legislative Advocacy Information

The 111th General Assembly will convene on January 8 at 12 noon. New legislators will be taking their seats this year. After formally opening, the legislature will pause to reorganize and incorporate the new members into the system.

Find your legislator: http://bit.ly/2Qm77WM.


Sign up to receive TCCY federal policy information by following the instructions at https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/tccy/advocacy-policy/federal-advocacy-issues/leg-listserv.html.

TCCY's Budget Recommendations are also available.
**Funding Opportunity**

HUD’s Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes (OLHCHH) has received additional lead hazard control funding. HUD plans to publish the combined Lead Hazard Reduction; (Lead Hazard Control (LHC) and Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration (LHRD)) Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in early 2019.

Applicants are highly encouraged to access NOFAs using www.grants.gov, and can sign up to be notified when the NOFA is published.

Visit our OLHCHH website at www.hud.gov/healthyhomes for more information regarding the program division grant programs and how to apply for funding.

Return to Table of Contents.

**Update**

In December, TCCY staff provided gifts for two teens in state custody this year. Gerald Papica, TCCY Ombudsman Program director, has organized this efforts for years. For many years, TCCY has chosen to assist older children in foster care, who may be less likely to be chosen for holiday gifts, as people prefer to buy gifts for younger children.

Papica

Return to Table of Contents.

**Mark Your Calendar**

Jan. 11, 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon CST, **Mid-Cumberland Council on Children and Youth Legislative Breakfast: “Our Communities as Trauma-Informed Communities,”** Wilson County Board of Education Event Center, 415 Harding Dr., Lebanon, with representatives from Wilson County Health Department, Dickson County Juvenile Court, Fall-Hamilton Elementary School and Williamson County CASA. Info: Susan.Cope@tn.gov. Register: http://bit.ly/2RIlfEX.


March 12-13, **Children's Advocacy Days, "CAD Tennessee: Ideas Worth Sharing,"** War Memorial Auditorium, Nashville. Contact: John.Rust@tn.gov

Return to Top.
In the News


Research Information


Tennessee KIDS COUNT Facts

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability or ability to pay, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity operated, funded or overseen by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY). It is the intent of TCCY to bind all agencies, organizations or governmental units operating under its jurisdiction and control to fully comply with and abide by the spirit and intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

To suggest content or manage subscriptions to The Advocate, contact fay.delk@tn.gov. If you would like to receive this email through the TCCY ListServ, email listserv@listserv.tn.gov, leave the subject blank and type Subscribe TCCY Your First Name Your Last Name. Information on other address changes is available at https://www.tn.gov/tccy/advocate-collaborate/tccy-ac-advlegs/tccy-ac-advacacy/leg-listserv.html.