



September 20, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to announce the publication of a special [Public Health Reports \(PHR\) supplement](#) that focuses on data systems and their use in addressing [social determinants of health](#) (SDH)—the underlying economic and social conditions that influence the health of individuals and communities. This special supplement examines the increasing burden and worsening inequities in some health outcomes and how the use of data can expand the knowledge base on the determinants that affect these outcomes.

In his special commentary, "The Ultimate Measures of Health," Dr. Howard K. Koh, Assistant Secretary for Health at the Department of Health and Human Services, underscores the importance of tracking SDH—not just disease outcomes— and how these measurements will ultimately impact public health functions.

My colleagues from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Drs. Kathleen McDavid Harrison and Hazel D. Dean, guest editors for this special supplement, describe the need for a holistic approach to disease prevention that involves not only addressing individual, social, structural, and environmental determinants, but also working with a wide array of government and private sector organizations—including health, education, justice, environment, and labor.

Researchers writing for this *PHR* supplement also explore how data from national- and state-level public health surveillance systems can provide insight into SDH; how public health law research can help address SDH; how gender and gender equity can be measured and incorporated as SDH in analyses of health outcomes; and how labor, housing, and policy data, together with public health data, can provide critical insight into SDH and health outcomes.

The publication of this peer-reviewed supplement is one of the SDH activities and commitments that CDC's National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP) outlined in the White Paper—[Establishing a Holistic Framework to Reduce Inequities in HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STDs, and Tuberculosis in the United States](#). The White Paper defines the strategic vision of NCHHSTP for reducing health disparities and promoting health equity related to our conditions of interest. A *PHR* supplement—[Addressing Social Determinants of Health in the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, Sexually Transmitted Infections and Tuberculosis](#) was previously published by NCHHSTP.

Thank you for your interest in exploring how data can broaden our understanding of SDH and how SDH affects our efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS, viral hepatitis, STDs, and tuberculosis. I urge you to review this special supplement and revisit the NCHHSTP White Paper on SDH.

Sincerely,

/Kevin A. Fenton/

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<http://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp>