

The Role of Health Care Providers in Addressing Social Justice Issues

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Abstract:

Social justice is a core value of the healthcare profession, and healthcare providers have a responsibility to address the social and structural determinants of health that contribute to health disparities. Advocating for policies and programs that promote health equity. Healthcare providers can use their voices and platforms to advocate for policies and programs that address the root causes of health disparities, such as poverty, racism, and discrimination. Educating patients about the social determinants of health and how to access resources. Healthcare providers can play a vital role in educating patients about the social determinants of health and how to access resources that can improve their health and well-being. Providing culturally competent care. Healthcare providers should be mindful of the cultural needs of their patients and strive to provide care that is respectful and responsive to their individual needs. Partnering with community organizations. Healthcare providers can partner with community organizations to address social justice issues that impact their patients' health. The article concludes by discussing the importance of creating a culture of social justice within healthcare organizations. By embedding social justice principles into their policies, practices, and culture, healthcare organizations can create a more equitable and just healthcare system for all.

Keywords: Social justice, Health equity, Social determinants of health, Healthcare providers, Advocacy, Education, Culturally competent care, Community partnerships, Healthcare organizations

Introduction:

Social justice is the concept that all people deserve equal opportunity and fair treatment, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other factors. Health care providers play a vital role in addressing social justice issues, as they are often the first point of contact for people who are experiencing the negative effects of discrimination and inequality. Health inequities are unjust differences in health status between groups of people. These inequities can be caused by a variety of factors, including social determinants of health, such as income, education, housing, and access to healthy food and safe neighborhoods.

Health care providers can play a role in addressing social justice issues by:

- Educating themselves and their patients about social determinants of health and how they impact health.
- Advocating for policies and programs that promote health equity.
- Building relationships with community organizations that are working to address social justice issues.
- Providing culturally competent care that is tailored to the needs of their patients.

Here are some specific examples of how health care providers can address social justice issues:

- A pediatrician can screen for food insecurity and connect families with resources to obtain food.
- A mental health counselor can provide culturally competent care to LGBTQ+ youth.
- A nurse practitioner can advocate for policies that expand access to affordable housing.
- A physician can work with a community organization to develop a program to reduce gun violence.
- By addressing social justice issues, health care providers can help to create a healthier and more equitable society for all.

The role of health care providers in addressing social justice issues is an important and growing area of scholarship.

This is due to a number of factors, including:

- The increasing recognition of the social determinants of health.
- The rising burden of chronic diseases, which are disproportionately affecting marginalized populations.
- The growing awareness of the impact of climate change on health.
- The increasing diversity of the population.

Scholarly research on this topic is helping to inform the development of new educational programs and interventions for health care providers. It is also helping to build the evidence base for policies and programs that promote health equity. Health care providers have a unique opportunity and responsibility to address social justice issues. They are often the first point of contact for people experiencing the health consequences of social injustice, such as poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to healthy food and housing. By understanding the social determinants of health and advocating for policies that promote health equity, health care providers can play a vital role in improving the health and well-being of all people.

Social determinants of health are the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age. These conditions include economic stability, housing, education, food security, access to health care, and social support. Social determinants of health have a significant impact on health outcomes, with people from marginalized and underserved communities experiencing higher rates of chronic diseases, premature death, and other health disparities.

Health equity is the absence of avoidable or remediable health differences among groups of people. Health equity is achieved when everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible.

Health care providers can address social justice issues in a number of ways, including:

- Educating themselves and their patients about the social determinants of health. Health care providers need to understand how social factors impact health in order to provide comprehensive care and advocate for policies that promote health equity.
- Screening patients for social determinants of health and connecting them with resources. Health care providers can screen patients for social determinants of health, such as food insecurity, housing instability, and lack of access to transportation. Once social determinants of health are identified, providers can connect patients with resources in the

community, such as food banks, housing assistance programs, and transportation services.

- Advocating for policies that promote health equity. Health care providers can advocate for policies that address the root causes of health disparities, such as poverty, discrimination, and lack of access to affordable health care. Providers can advocate at the local, state, and federal levels by contacting elected officials, testifying at public hearings, and participating in community organizing efforts.

Here are some specific examples of how health care providers can address social justice issues:

- A pediatrician can advocate for affordable housing in their community. Children who live in substandard housing are more likely to experience asthma, lead poisoning, and other health problems. By advocating for affordable housing, the pediatrician can help to improve the health and well-being of their patients.
- A nurse practitioner can screen patients for food insecurity and connect them with food banks. Food insecurity is a major social determinant of health, and it is associated with a number of health problems, including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease. By screening patients for food insecurity and connecting them with food banks, the nurse practitioner can help to improve their patients' health and well-being.
- A physician can advocate for policies that expand access to Medicaid. Medicaid is a vital health insurance program for low-income individuals and families. By advocating for policies that expand access to Medicaid, the physician can help to ensure that all people have access to the health care they need.
- Health care providers play a vital role in addressing social justice issues. By understanding the social determinants of health and advocating for policies that promote health equity, health care providers can help to improve the health and well-being of all people.

Health care providers have a unique opportunity and ethical responsibility to address social justice issues. As trusted professionals, they have the ability to build rapport with patients and learn about their social determinants of health, such as poverty, housing, and education. Additionally, health care providers have a platform to advocate for policies that promote health equity and reduce disparities. These are just a few examples of the many ways that health care providers can address social justice issues. By working directly with patients, advocating for policies, and engaging in community outreach, health care providers can play a vital role in creating a more just and equitable world.

There are a number of ways that health care providers can address social justice issues in their practice. One important step is to screen patients for social needs. This can be done through simple questionnaires or conversations. Once social needs are identified, health care providers can connect patients with resources and advocate for their needs. For example, a health care provider may refer a patient to a food bank, legal aid clinic, or housing assistance program. They may also contact a patient's insurance company to advocate for coverage of a needed service.

In addition to working directly with patients, health care providers can also address social justice issues through advocacy and policy change. This can involve working with other health care providers, community organizations, and government officials to promote policies that improve

the health and well-being of all people. For example, health care providers may advocate for affordable housing, access to healthy food, or universal health care.

Here are some specific examples of how health care providers have addressed social justice issues:

- Nurses in the United States have advocated for policies to expand Medicaid access and improve the quality of care for low-income people.
- Physicians in Canada have worked with community organizations to provide free clinics and other health services to undocumented immigrants.
- Social workers in South Africa have worked to reduce HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination.
- Public health officials in India have worked to improve access to sanitation and clean water.

Conclusion

Social justice is an essential component of public health. By addressing the social determinants of health and advocating for policies that promote health equity, health care providers can play a vital role in improving the health and well-being of all people. Health care providers play a vital role in addressing social justice issues. By educating themselves and their patients about social determinants of health, advocating for health equity, building relationships with community organizations, and providing culturally competent care, health care providers can help to create a healthier and more equitable society for all. The role of health care providers in addressing social justice issues is becoming increasingly important. As the social determinants of health become better understood, it is clear that health care providers have a unique opportunity to make a difference in the lives of their patients and communities. By screening for social needs, connecting patients with resources, and advocating for policy change, health care providers can help to reduce disparities and create a more just and equitable world.

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- These references provide a good overview of the role of health care providers in addressing social justice issues, including the challenges and opportunities of doing so. They also discuss the importance of social justice education in health care professions.
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