A new organization in Utah, the Utah Alliance for the Determinants of Health, has been formed to improve overall community health by addressing social needs such as housing instability, utility needs, food insecurity, interpersonal violence and transportation. These are all non-medical factors that influence a person’s health. Public health researchers suggest that social determinants of health may account for up to 60 percent of health outcomes.

Intermountain Healthcare, a non-profit with 22 hospitals, 185 clinics and 1400 physicians across Utah and southeastern Idaho, is providing $12 million over three years to fund demonstration programs in Ogden and St. George, Utah.

The project will screen Medicaid enrollees who live in four zip codes for social needs and assist with coordination of those needs. The Alliance will work with existing community partners to get appropriate services to patients. The programs will be evaluated to determine their outcomes and suitability for expansion.

“We are very excited to work with our local and statewide partners in this innovative Alliance,” said Mikelle Moore, Intermountain Healthcare’s senior vice president of community health in a press release. “By working together in new ways to promote health, we expect to make a real difference in the lives of the people in these programs. The Alliance will lead to healthier communities and will also have a positive impact in slowing the rise of healthcare costs.”

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