

Title: Comparing Social Need Support in Medical Housing: Differences by Sponsorship Type and Medicaid Expansion Status

Abstract

Background: Housing is a crucial health-related social need, especially for families or individuals who need to travel outside their communities to access healthcare. Organizations like Ronald McDonald House Charities and American Cancer Society (ACS) Hope Lodge aim to alleviate these challenges by providing temporary housing and reducing financial burdens. Many of these organizations also offer additional support services, including meals, transportation, and other health-related social needs. Understanding the variability in social support offered by these organizations, especially in the context of state-level health policies, is essential for improving care models and healthcare access.

Objective: This study examines differences in social need support among medical housing sponsorship types and compares service availability between Medicaid-expanded and non-expanded states.

Methods: A nationwide census of 502 medical housing organizations in the United States was conducted. Organizations were categorized by sponsorship type (e.g., Ronald McDonald House Charities, Fisher House Charities, ACS Hope Lodge, Independent house, and Hospital Affiliated) and the social needs they offered (e.g., meals, transportation, logistic support, mental health support, wellness support, and children's services). The analysis compared service availability between sponsorship type as well as Medicaid-expanded and non-expanded states.

Results: Significant disparities in service provision were observed across sponsorship types, with mental health and child-related services notably lacking. Organizations in Medicaid-expanded states provided significantly more support in transportation, domestic services, wellness, and child-related services compared to those in non-expanded states.

Conclusion: The findings reveal critical gaps in social need support among medical housing organizations, particularly in mental health and child-related supports. States with Medicaid expansion demonstrate more comprehensive service offerings, highlighting the potential benefits of policy changes. Addressing these disparities can enhance the effectiveness of medical housing and improve patient support. This research lays the groundwork for future investigations into the impact of different medical housing models on healthcare outcomes.