

# United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps

*America's Health Responders*



Aisha K. Mix, Rear Admiral, Chief Nurse Officer, USPHS

NACNEP, August 10, 2022



## Objectives

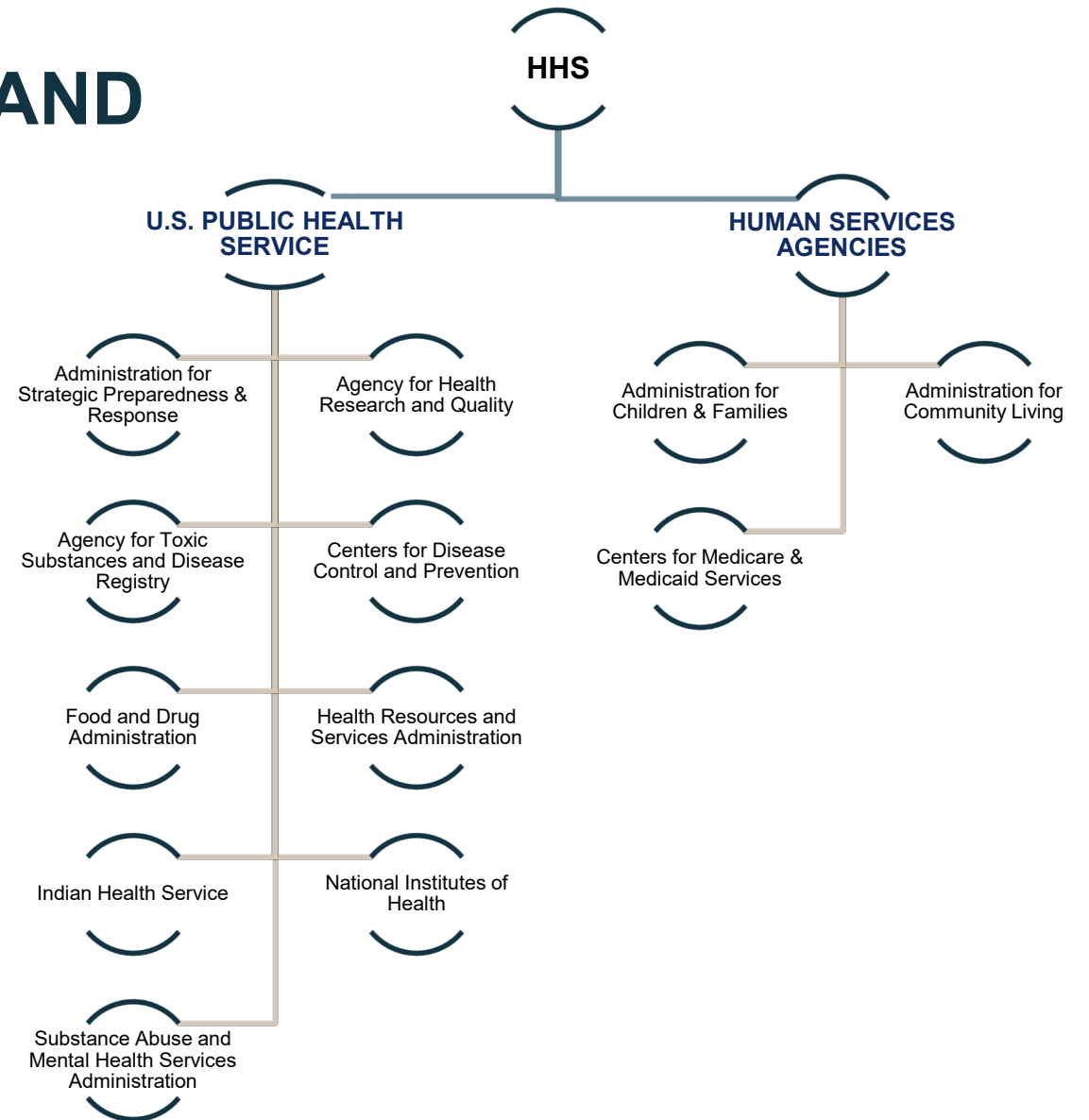
### By the end of this discussion

- Differentiate between the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) and PHS Commissioned Corps Nursing.
- Outline the federal capabilities of the PHS and the role of PHS nurses during disasters or public health emergencies.
- Describe current challenges and opportunities for public health nursing.



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- 12 operating divisions administer health and human services and conduct research.
  - U.S. Public Health Service
  - Human Services Agencies
- HHS Office of the Secretary includes staffing divisions led by Assistant Secretaries.





# U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (PHS) COMMISSIONED CORPS

PROTECT, PROMOTE, AND ADVANCE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF OUR NATION

## Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH)

- ASH provides oversight for the PHS Commissioned Corps.

## OASH Office of the Surgeon General

- SG provides operational command, with focus on national health priorities.
  - COVID-19
  - Health Misinformation
  - Health Worker Burnout
  - Youth Mental Health



Admiral Rachel Levine  
Assistant Secretary for Health















Vice Admiral Vivek Murthy  
U.S. Surgeon General



# PROFESSIONAL CATEGORIES

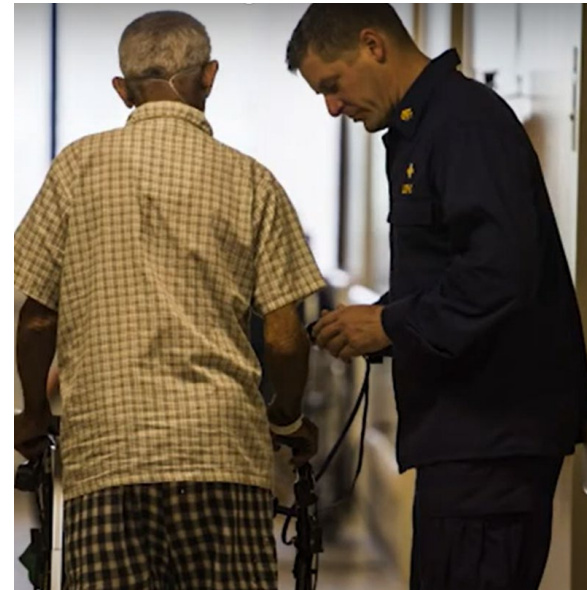


 <p>MEDICAL</p>	 <p>DENTIST</p>	 <p>VETERINARIAN</p>	 <p>NURSE</p>
 <p>THERAPIST</p>	 <p>PHARMACIST</p>	 <p>DIETICIAN</p>	 <p>HEALTH SERVICES</p>
 <p>ENGINEER</p>	 <p>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</p>	 <p>SCIENTIST</p>	



# USPHS NURSE CATEGORY

- Registered Nurses and Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (CRNA, CNM, CNS, NP)
- Various specialties
  - Community health
  - Public health, health policy
  - Case management
  - Psychiatric/mental health
  - Women's health
  - Pediatrics





# U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSIONED CORPS

## WHERE WE WORK

Nearly 6,000 officers in more than 800 locations across nation and the world.

- Department of Health and Human Services
  - IHS, FDA, NIH, Office of the Secretary, CMS, CDC
- Department of Homeland Security
  - ICE, U.S. Coast Guard
- Department of Justice
  - Federal Bureau of Prisons
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Defense
- Department of the Interior
- Environmental Protection Agency



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# WHAT WE DO

- **Provide essential health services**

We go where most do not go to provide care for vulnerable and underserved populations.

- **Serve on the frontline of public health emergencies**

We respond quickly to natural disasters, disease outbreaks and global public health emergencies as well as serve on humanitarian missions.

- **Lead public health programs, policy development**

We utilize our experience, skills, and networks to provide leadership within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and throughout the federal government.

- **Advance innovation and science**

We work at the forefront of medical challenges such as COVID-19, cancer, and the opioid crisis.

**Protect, promote and advance the health and safety of our nation.**





# PHS RESPONSE AND RECOVERY



## National Response Framework

*Fourth Edition  
October 28, 2019*

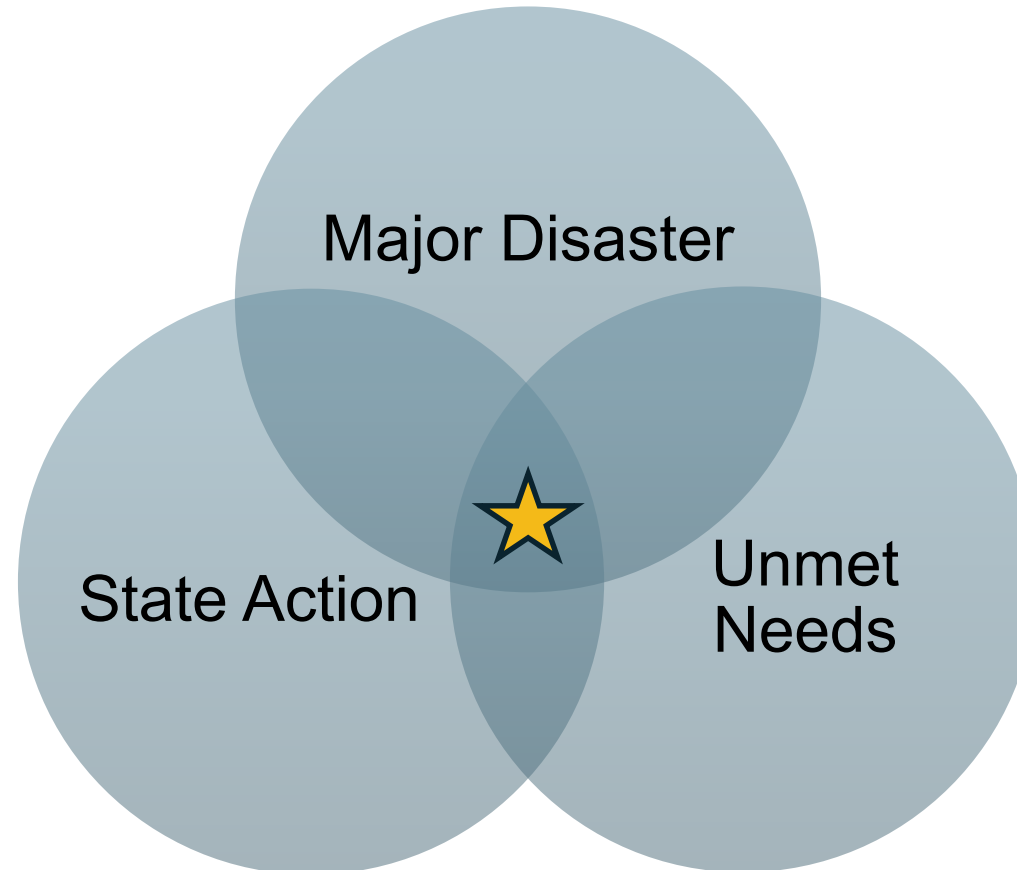


## National Disaster Recovery Framework

*Second Edition  
June 2016*



# WHEN WE GO: MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION



# RESPONSE: Emergency Support Functions

ESF #1 Transportation

ESF #2 Communications

ESF #3 Public Works & Engineering

ESF #4 Firefighting

ESF #5 Information & Planning

*ESF #6 Mass Care, Emergency Assistance,  
Temporary Housing, & Human Assistance*

ESF #7 Logistics

**ESF #8 Public Health & Medical Services**

ESF #9 Search & Rescue

ESF #10 Oil & Hazardous Materials  
Response

ESF #11 Agriculture & Natural Resources

ESF #12 Energy

ESF #13 Public Safety & Security

ESF #14 Cross-Sector Business and  
Infrastructure

ESF #15 External Affairs



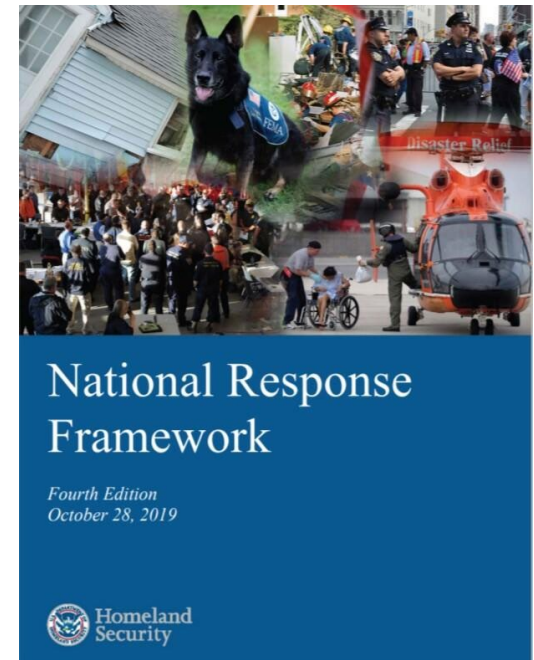


# ESF #8 – Public Health and Medical Services

## ESF Coordinator: Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Coordinates the mechanisms for assistance in response to an actual or potential public health and medical disaster or incident. Functions include:

- Public health;
- Medical surge support, including patient movement;
- Behavioral health services;
- Mass fatality management; and
- Veterinary, medical, and public health services.



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# RECOVERY: Recovery Support Functions

- Economic
- Community Planning & Capacity Building
- Housing Recovery
- Health and Social Services
- Infrastructure Systems
- Natural & Cultural Resources

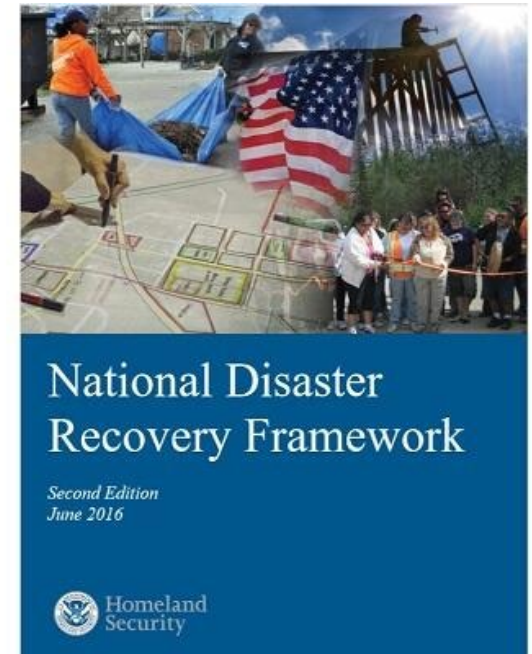


# Health and Social Services RSF

## RSF Coordinator: Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Coordinates the mechanisms for assistance in response to an actual or potential public health and medical disaster or incident. Functions include:

- Assess community health and social service needs.
- Restore health care, public health, and social services functions
- Restore and improve the resilience and sustainability of the health care system, social service capabilities.
- Promote independence and well-being of community members.





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# PHS COMMISSIONED CORP NURSING



# NURSE DEPLOYMENT ROLES

- Respond to public health emergencies.
- Manage pre-hospital triage and treatment.
- Provide onsite incident management.
- Design and implement community-based health education and training.



# COVID-19 DEPLOYMENTS

## PHS NURSES in ACTION

- Critically understaffed hospitals
- Immunization programs
- Contact tracing
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Alternative Care Sites

*Partnerships with federal, territorial, state, county, city, local, community, and non-governmental organizations*





# FEDERAL PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING LEADERSHIP

## CNO PRIORITIES

- Promote Nursing as a Profession
- Mobilize Nurses to Address SG Priorities
- Recruit and Retain Public Health Nurses

## PUBLIC HEALTH CHALLENGES

- Access to Care
- Workforce Diversity
- Community Preparedness
- Health Disparities and Inequities



# LEVERAGING PUBLIC HEALTH NURSES

## Federal, State, Tribal, Territorial, Local Engagement

- PHN Roles & Functions
  - What is public health nursing?
  - Public Health 3.0
- Centering Community
  - Upstream, Midstream, Downstream Thinking
- Workforce Development
  - Enumeration
  - Physical and Mental Wellbeing



# EIGHT ROLES and FUNCTIONS of PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING



Graphic used with permission from the NC Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health

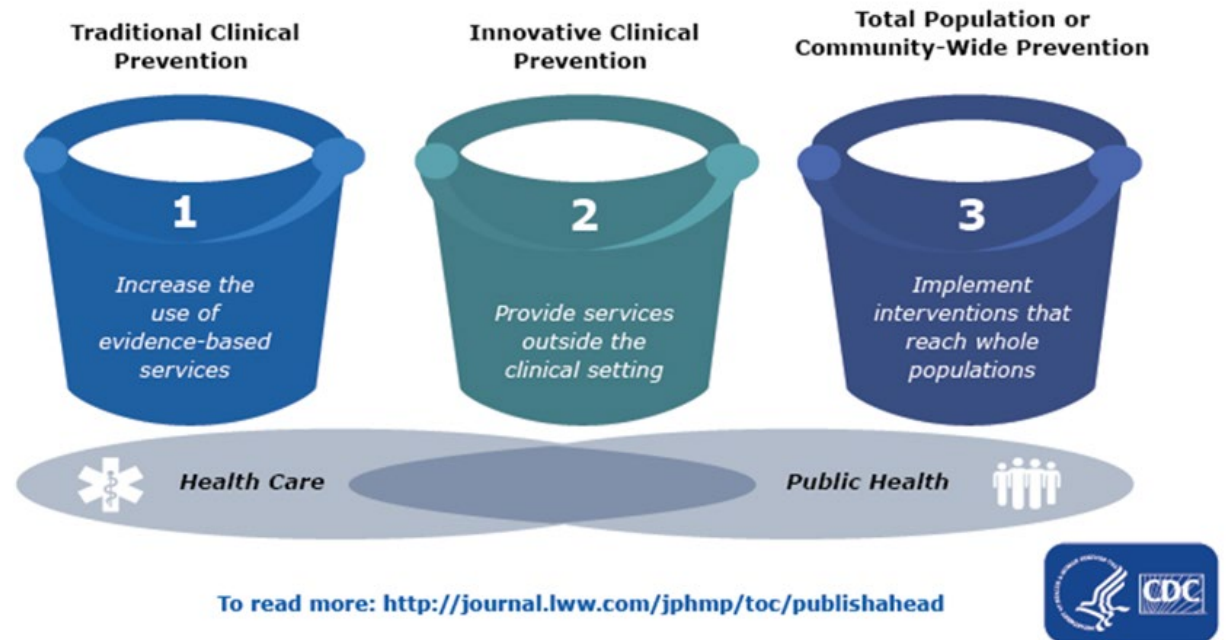




# OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHS NURSE LEADERSHIP

## PUBLIC HEALTH 3.0, Centering Community in Response and Steady State

- Transition from a focus on clinical prevention.
- Identification of alternative settings to achieve and maintain health.
- Targeting inequities to remove disparities.

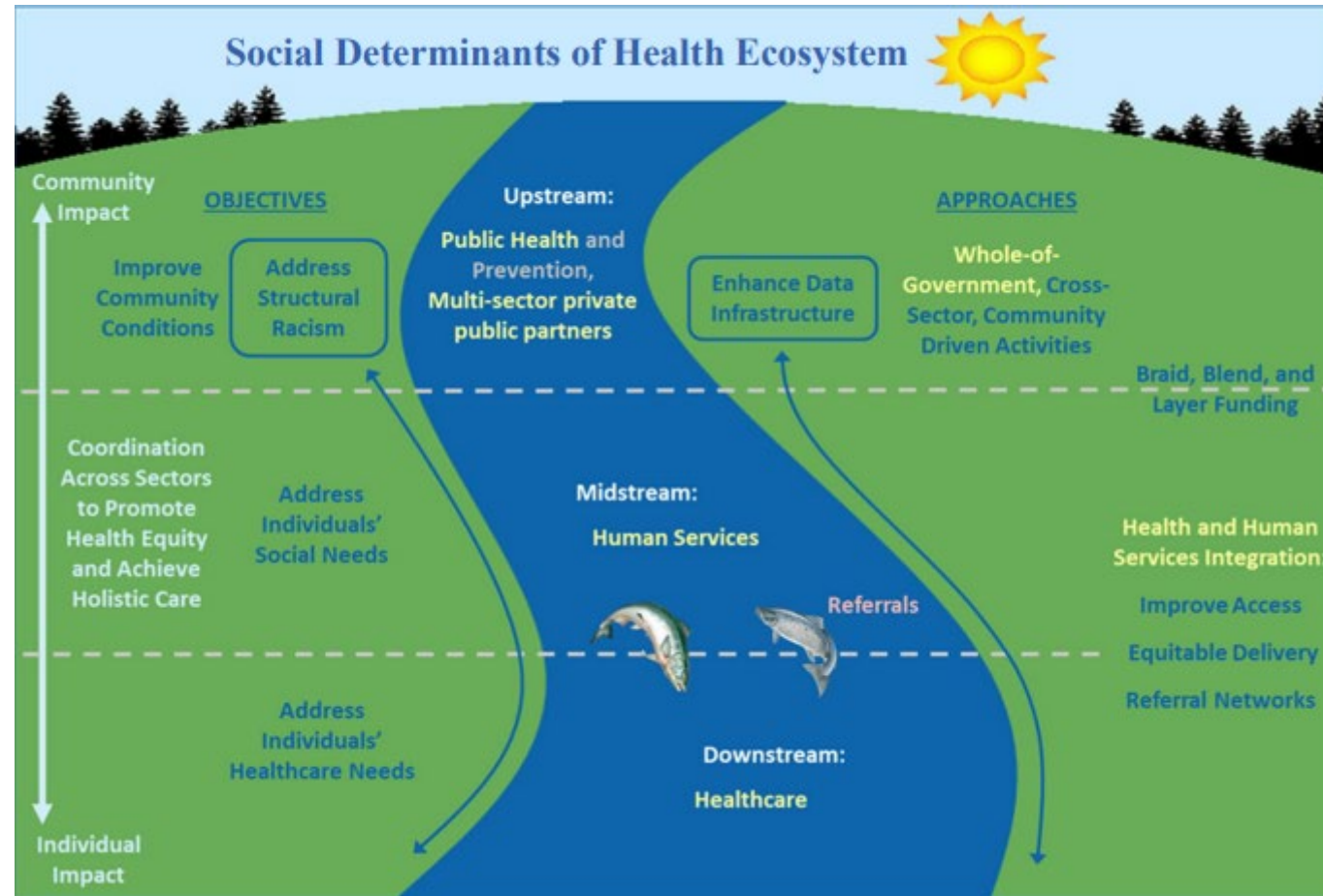


# BUILDING THE PHN WORKFORCE for NOW and the FUTURE

- Knowing what you need requires knowing what you have.
  - **Enumeration of Public Health Nurses in the United States: Limits of Current Standards (AJPH, June 2022)**
  - **Public Health Workforce Interests and Needs Survey (PH WINS) 2021 Summary Report: Nurses** in state and local government public health
  
- Federal coordination to convene working group focused on public health nursing workforce across all levels of government.
  - Address public health nurse burnout
    - **U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on Building a Thriving Health Workforce**
  - Establish and evaluate best/promising practices for nurse-led public health teams.
  - Incorporate design thinking for innovative funding, collaboration, data interoperability, and other mechanisms to share resources.



# OUR WHY: ADDRESSING SDOH TO ACHIEVE HEALTHY EQUITY



HHS strategy adapted from Castrucci B, Auerbach J. (2019). Meeting Individual Social Needs Falls Short of Addressing Social Determinants of Health. Health Affairs Blog.

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COMMISSIONED CORPS  
OF THE U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

