

Why we did our project

Kaiser Permanente and other health care systems nationwide are creating programs to identify and address patients' social needs. Social health integration is a new and broad area, so it's important to be strategic in pursuing the most urgent and impactful social health integration activities. Understanding how to focus resources where they will have the most impact will require understanding the top priorities for learning and action in the social health space. To address this need, we used a partner-engaged approach called [concept mapping](#) to identify the most relevant and important opportunities empirical and operational questions to pursue.

What we did

In November 2021, SONNET's Coordinating Center asked **746 operational leaders, providers, researchers, and staff** from inside and outside KP to respond to the prompt:



"One thing I wish we knew more about to advance my work addressing social health..."

We then grouped responses together to create 92 summary statements that described the opportunities respondents raised. Next, we coordinated a rating process with the operational leaders, providers, researchers, and staff who received the original prompt — and with subject matter experts from SONNET's Evaluation and Research Committee (ERC) KP's Social Health Practice (SHP) Team. Each individual collaborator who participated reviewed the opportunity statements and **rated them on a scale from 1 to 10 based on:**

- **Impact:** "How critical to you think this is in improving the social health of our members and the communities we serve."
- **Urgency:** "How pressing do you think this is and recommend KP addresses it now?"

Members of the ERC and the SHP team also **sorted the summary statements into 11 topics that fell into 4 overall themes:**

1. **Empirical opportunities:** Understanding the dimensions and cascading influences of social health; innovating social health
2. **Engaging collaborators/partners:** Partnering with CBOs; ensuring equitable impact; centering stakeholder perspectives
3. **Operations (implementation):** Building operational capacity; supporting operations; translating social health research into practice
4. **Strategy:** Designing KP's social health strategy; aligning across the enterprise; planning structural supports for sustainable social health integration

Finally, we mapped the impact and urgency scores onto a scatterplot with 4 quadrants that shows highest-rated statements in the upper right quadrant called the "Go-Zone."

Our project by the numbers



Responses & summary statements

746 Operational leaders, providers, researchers, and staff from inside and outside KP asked to respond to the prompt

515 Responses collected and grouped

92 Summary statements created from the grouped responses



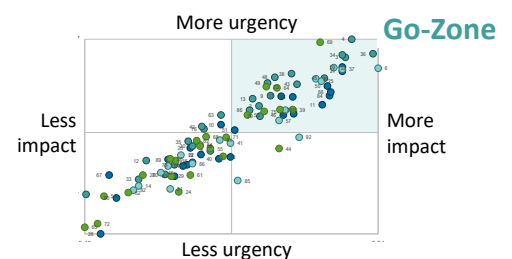
Rating & sorting into themes

164 Operational leaders, providers, researchers, and staff who were asked to respond to the prompt rated summary statements

30 Subject matter experts from SONNET's ERC & KP's Social Health Practice Team rated summary statements and sorted them into 11 topics

4 Overall themes emerged

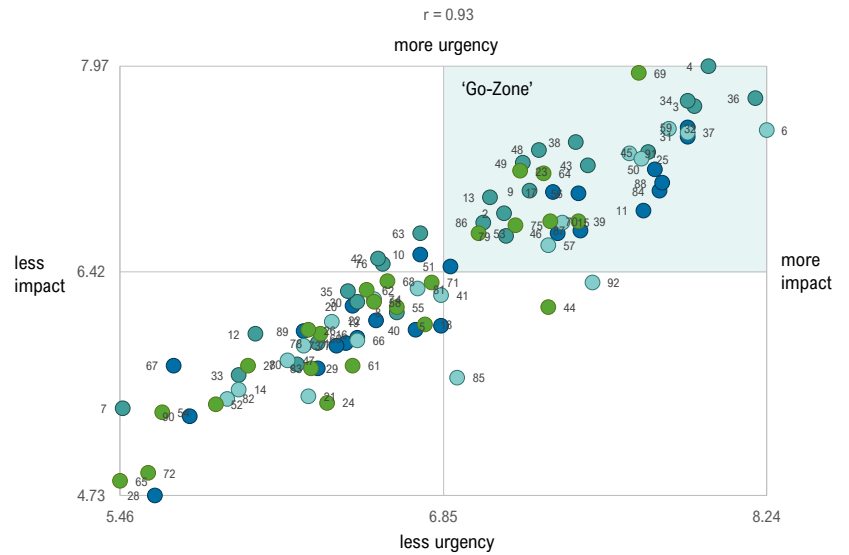
Example scatterplot



What we learned

Of the 92 summary statements rated, **39 landed in the Go-Zone**. The top 10 opportunities (highest impact, most urgent) are listed below, and the full Go-Zone list is included in the Appendix on page 3. (For information about summary statements that weren't in the Go-Zone, please email us at sonnet@kp.org.)

- Empirical opportunities
- Engaging collaborators/partners
- Operations (implementation)
- Strategy



10 highest-rated opportunity statements

- | | |
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Align social health practice with care delivery and operational goals. 2 Build implementation support for social health integration in the delivery system. 3 Make KP's investment in social health activities long-term so multi-year projects are possible. 4 Train providers to discuss and address social health with members. 5 Clarify which social risks to prioritize to have the biggest impact. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Support KP staff who work directly with members impacted by SDOH. 7 Learn how to address social needs in a culturally competent manner. 8 Design sustainable social health interventions that address the structural factors that impact health. 9 Ascertain what types of social health resources members most desire. 10 Create social health tools and communications that are relevant and meaningful to our members in their preferred language. |
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How we can use this work to advance social health practice at KP and beyond

Our results provide KP and the field of social health with a roadmap of areas that are of highest priority for implementation and investigation. SONNET used these results in 2023 to develop and conduct projects around statements in the Go-Zone: one that examined the relationship between unmet social needs and future health care use and another that explored members' preferences around sharing social needs.

Acknowledgments

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