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Practicum Site: Verily Life Sciences

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Social Determinants of Health Strategy & Analytics at Verily



Introduction: Social determinants of health (SDoH) have become an area of interest for Verily Life Sciences, an Alphabet company headquartered in Mountain View, California that bridges data science and healthcare to deliver precision health. This practicum focused on an SDoH strategy project for a substance use disorder (SUD) facility in Ohio that provides wraparound services through personalized, evidence-based, and tech-enabled care. Specifically, this practicum was intended to develop a holistic assessment of SDoH related to SUD, provide recommendations, and design a business case for the inclusion of SDoH measurement at the SUD facility.

Methods: The primary methods for conducting this practicum consisted of literature reviews and internal stakeholder interviews. The literature reviews and internal stakeholder interviews informed the development of an assessment of SDoH related to SUD, including an environmental scan of SDoH measurement best practices and a market landscape for SDoH. These methods were then used to shape specific recommendations and the business case.

Results: The practicum project helped identify suggestions for SDoH data collection and measurement at the SUD facility. Three project deliverables were produced throughout the course of this practicum in the form of presentations to Verily staff and the leadership team at the SUD facility.

Conclusions: The results of this practicum prove that SDoH continues to be a focal point for various healthcare organizations, including the SUD facility. The literature reviews also suggest that addressing SDoH for the SUD population could yield better patient health outcomes, improved quality of life, and potentially reduced healthcare costs. This practicum also highlights the importance of tech-enabled care as an avenue to increase access to SUD recovery services. However, as with most digital health services, health equity is an ongoing challenge since technology could unintentionally increase health disparities within the SUD population. Overall, the practicum project fulfilled its intended goal of providing recommendations related to SDoH strategy, including suggestions for SDoH data collection and measurement.