



## Health Sector: Recommendations to Advance Social Connection



Coalition to End  
Social Isolation  
& Loneliness

*We envision a society where every individual will one day have the opportunities and supports necessary to be socially engaged.*

### The Challenge

Social isolation and loneliness take a toll on individuals, leading to poorer health outcomes, higher rates of mortality, and higher healthcare costs. Social connection, or lack of social connection, is a social determinant of health that influences physical, mental, and emotional health outcomes. A lack of social connection has been compared to the health impact of smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

### Our Recommendations

The Coalition believes that focusing on the needs of the person through expanded coverage of evidence-based interventions, standardized screenings, assessments, and evaluations can address the drivers of health that impact social connection and reduce the prevalence of social isolation, loneliness, and disconnection.



## To provide better health services and supports, policymakers should:

1. Incentivize Medicare and Medicaid providers to assess and/or screen for social isolation, loneliness, and social connection.



2. Direct the Department of HHS to build a set of core competencies for streamlined measurement and data collection of social isolation, loneliness, social connection, and related behavioral health.



3. Incorporate social isolation assessment and quality measurement into the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation (CMMI) demonstrations.



4. Support social prescribing practice in medical institutions to refer patients to community-based resources.



5. Expand the scope of screenings for health-related social needs (HRSNs) to include social isolation, loneliness, and social connection.



6. Reauthorize the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) grant program that supports state efforts to integrate behavioral health and physical health services.



7. Expand access to affordable hearing aids through private insurance and original Medicare benefits.



8. Provide Medicare coverage for behavioral health peer support services.



9. Expand coverage of school-based health clinics for Medicaid payment for families and communities.



**Join us in advocating for solutions that encourage greater social connection.  
Read our full 2023-2024 Policy Priorities [here](#).**

### About Us

The Coalition to End Social Isolation & Loneliness, founded in 2018, advocates for policy change that combats the adverse effects of social isolation and loneliness. The Coalition represents some of the most influential consumer groups, patient advocates, health plans, community-based organizations, behavioral health groups, and private sector innovators in the United States. Visit our website at [www.endsocialisolation.org](http://www.endsocialisolation.org)