# **Labor Unions** as a Social Determinant of Health







## higher wages

among unionized and non-unionzed\*\* workers

the *average\** union worker earns

\* black workers 26.0%

\* asian workers

\* latino workers

39.2%

14.7% 52.1%

The minimum wage is 40% higher in states with high union density.

\*\*The *presence* of unions *increases* wages for *ALL* workers.

higher quality housing, nutrition, education, and childcare

*improves* **mental** health

reduces negative health outcomes associated with **stress** 



better access to healthcare

higher rates of employer-provided health insurance

> more paid leave for doctor's appointments



better management of chronic and acute illness

> earlier disease detection and more prompt treatment

when workers are NOT forced to choose between going to a doctor's appointment and earning money to meet basic needs, they are able to attend to all aspects of their **health** 

#### more paid sick leave

and paid family leave



union non-union improves individual and public health

by reducing the spread of infection

among coworkers, families, and communities

reduces complications of disease caused by *delayed* recovery





stronger rights to refuse dangerous work and request light duty work after injury

*more* **hours** spent on workplace **safety trainings** 

# improved workplace safety

increased use of workers' compensation benefits

more **OSHA** inspections

(workers are *more* likely to report safety concerns due to reduced risk of employer retaliation)

prevents chronic and acute illness

by reducing exposure to carcinogens and hazardous materials

fewer complications of injury

by providing the conditions to heal from . work and non-work-related injury without losing **income** 

fewer work-related injuries and deaths

(declines in unionization, as a result of anti-union "right to work" legislation, is linked to a 14.2% increase in occupational mortality)

### reduced wage inequality

by *raising* wages for low-wage workers, women, and people of color



#### improves public health

by achieving a more equal distribution of health-promoting resources

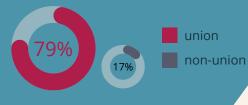
increases life expectancy and quality by promoting physiological, mental, and psychosocial health

fewer "deaths of despair"

(deaths due to drug overdose, alcoholism, and suicide)

# better **pensions**

access to **employer-funded** retirement funds



#### improves physiological, mental, and **psychosocial health** in older adults

provides the financial resources to maintain health during the years that it is most difficult to do so

Labor unions and health: A literature review of pathways and outcomes in the workplace, Preventive Medicine Reports Union Facts: The Value of Collective Voice, AFL-CIO Feel the benefit: union workers receive far better pay and rights, Congress finds, The Guardian

Does unionization and working under collective agreements promote health?, Health Promotion International

Does 'right to work' imperil the right to health? The effect of labour unions on workplace fatalities, Occupational and Environmental Medicine