

Labor Unions as a Social Determinant of Health



benefits of labor unions

effects on health



higher wages

among **unionized** and **non-unionized**** workers

the *average** union worker earns

11.2%

more than **non-union** workers
of similar education level and skill

26.0%

* **black** workers

* **asian** workers

39.2%

* **latino** workers

* **female** service workers

14.7%

52.1%



The **presence of unions **increases** wages for **ALL** workers.
The **minimum wage** is **40% higher** in states with **high union density**.

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



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**)

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

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



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



■ union
■ non-union

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

