



Socially Determined Uses SafeGraph Data to Advance the State of Public Health in a Meaningful Way

THE COMPANY



THE PROBLEM

How to ensure people get the best care and stay as healthy as possible

THE SOLUTION

SafeGraph Places

THE FUTURE

Changing the nature of public health, one social determinant at a time

THE PROBLEM

How to ensure people get the best care and stay as healthy as possible

The traditional healthcare model is fee-for-service. This basically means that people pay—via insurance or out-of-pocket—whenever they visit their general practitioner (GP), go to the emergency room, purchase prescription medications, get lab tests done, etc. This model tends to disproportionately favor customers with insurance, disposable income, and access to various healthcare resources. Conversely, because many of these services often incur exorbitant costs, it puts disadvantaged or uninsured populations at risk of not getting the healthcare services they need in order to stay healthy for the long term.

As a result of these inequities, the industry is beginning a slow migration toward a risk-based reimbursement model wherein resources get funneled into local health providers who can provide *the right amount of coverage* and better programs to support their patients' healthcare needs. Because these healthcare providers on the ground are closer to their patients—and their respective health issues—they are in a better position to assume the risk by allocating the resources received in the best way possible to keep their patients healthy.

This begs the question: How can payers, providers, life sciences companies, and other players within the healthcare industry know where to allocate funds and resources to support public health in a more effective, locally-relevant way?

As a starting point, they need to have a clear line of sight into the social determinants of health (SDOH) that keep underserved or disenfranchised populations from staying healthy. This is critical for being able to pinpoint the right allocation of resources at the hyper-local level. Of course, a big part of this requires having access to accurate, real-time location data.

And here's precisely where Socially Determined steps into the picture.

THE PROBLEM-SOLVER

Socially Determined

Socially Determined has a bold vision to be the primary source for delivering meaningful social risk insights that create impact at scale and make equitable healthcare a reality. In short, the company harnesses the full power of data to help payers, providers, life sciences companies, and others working in the public health sector to not only be able to identify the SDOH playing a role in a person's healthcare journey but also to pinpoint the best way to funnel resources for addressing public health needs. Their groundbreaking work has the potential to transform the entire healthcare ecosystem for the better, helping to make it more inclusive, affordable, and focused on driving better outcomes.

THE SOLUTION

SafeGraph Places

“We needed access to precise, accurate, clean, and always up-to-date location data to be able to do our work at scale,” explained Alan Lattimer, Socially Determined’s Chief Analytics Officer. “And it was clear from the start that SafeGraph could provide this to us.”

When working with other data providers or using publicly available data in the past, the Socially Determined team found that the data itself required a tremendous amount of cleaning before it could be used. This included removing ancillary information appended to the data that simply wasn’t pertinent to the analysis at hand—which became a time-consuming process.

“Healthcare companies have the charter to help the communities they serve, and with SafeGraph, we have a lever to pull to make a real difference.”

Alan Lattimer, Chief Analytics Officer at Socially Determined

Even more problematic was the fact that the data itself wasn’t always completely accurate. What sometimes was identified by the data as a hospital, for example, wasn’t actually a hospital at all but rather the hospital’s administrative services office. And when it comes to helping their customers take real and meaningful action to improve public health at a local level, it was critical for Socially Determined to have access to data with this level of granularity.

So, after testing a few samples of the SafeGraph Places dataset, pulled from both rural and suburban communities in the greater Washington DC metropolitan area—where Socially Determined’s headquarters is located—the team was pleased to find that SafeGraph data was able to identify, with hyper-local precision, the brick and mortar places that were critical to their analysis.

This made it possible for the team to do a side-to-side comparison versus other data sources, making it easier to see that SafeGraph was able to fill many of the gaps that rendered the data from other providers difficult to work with. This was especially the case around naming descriptions. “Because we could see that SafeGraph datasets could identify POIs with utmost accuracy, it was a no-brainer to move forward with SafeGraph as the right data partner for us,” said Lattimer.

And while having access to high-quality data is typically the most important aspect of working with any data provider, there was something else about SafeGraph that stood out to the Socially Determined team. “We have a true partnership with SafeGraph,” expressed Lattimer. “They want to know what’s working as well as what’s not—and they’re always ready to engage in a dialogue with us about the many exciting things we can do or achieve with their data together.”

Finally, it's worth noting that the Socially Determined team believes that they can use data in a meaningful way to change the world for the better. "We know SafeGraph is genuinely excited to help us use POI data to make a real difference," concluded Lattimer.

THE RESULT

Changing the nature of public health, one social determinant at a time

There are a lot of different ways that Socially Determined uses location data to gain a deeper understanding of the social determinants of health that impact various local populations.

Let's take the question of identifying what kind of access people have to healthy food as an example. At the Community level, Socially Determined has been able to use data to categorize communities as either "food swamps" (where access to healthy food is plentiful) or "food deserts" (where access to healthy food is limited or hard to get to). At the Individual level, they can zoom in and identify all food options in close proximity to where someone lives (via a Census Block Group) to provide accessibility insights in a more personalized way.

When addressing healthcare issues related to obesity or diabetes, for instance, simply relying on sometimes costly prescriptions to do the heavy lifting is not enough. Oftentimes part of the solution of helping people to get and stay healthy is just a matter of ensuring they can eat a healthy meal and not aggravate their health conditions further.

So, what can the broader healthcare ecosystem do with this information? For starters, by knowing where there are real gaps in peoples' access to healthy food, funds can be funneled into the development of food banks, food distribution centers, or new grocery stores to help make healthy food more accessible and, thus, minimize the negative impact of "food deserts."

Additionally, you can layer on transportation here to understand how easy it is for people to commute to get healthy food, pick up prescriptions, see a doctor, and so on. And in the instances where lacking access to proper healthcare resources is simply a matter of not being able to get to those resources in the first place, cities can use the information provided by Socially Determined to invest in new transportation infrastructure. Similarly, insurance or pharma companies could create a voucher program with a ride-share provider to make it easier for disadvantaged people to get the help they need, when they need it—all without the stress of having to choose between their own health or incurring hefty transportation expenses.

And while these are just a few examples of what Socially Determined's work is doing to improve the state of public health around the country, this is just the beginning. "SafeGraph is helping our customers identify the communities and individuals in need, so they can funnel resources in the right way," reiterated Lattimer. "If the entire healthcare ecosystem bands together to help people in need, we can really move the needle on shifting public health across the country."



Ready to see what SafeGraph's POI data can do for your team?

View the [data schema](#) or [contact sales](#) for more information.