Abstract
This paper examines recent trends in theory in health sociology in the United States and finds that the use of theory is flourishing. The central thesis is that the field has reached a mature state and is in the early stage of a paradigm shift away from a past focus on methodological individualism (in which the individual is the primary unit of analysis) toward a growing utilization of theories with a structural orientation. This outcome is materially aided by research methods (e.g., hierarchal linear modeling, biomarkers) providing measures of structural effects on the health of the individual that were often absent or under-developed in the past. Structure needs to be accounted for in any social endeavor and contemporary medical sociology appears to be doing precisely that as part of the next stage of its evolution. The recent contributions to theory in the sociology of health discussed in this paper are fundamental cause, medicalization, social capital, neighborhood disadvantage, and health lifestyle theories.

Keywords
Sociology of health, Recent sociological theory, Durkheim, Weber, Middle range theories