



# Social determinants of health

## Addressing patients' social health needs

ICD-10-CM SDOH codes included

### **Sixty percent of a person's health is impacted by behavioral, environmental and social conditions.<sup>1</sup>**

While the clinical aspects of patient health remain the highest priority for diagnosis and treatment, understanding patients' social needs can provide a holistic view of their overall health. Your patients' lifestyle choices often can put them at higher risks for health challenges like obesity, depression and heart disease, and sometimes can lead to multiple emergency department visits.<sup>2</sup> By identifying and addressing social determinants of health (SDOH), you and your staff are taking a comprehensive approach to patient care.

### **Social determinants of health**

SDOH are conditions in the environments in which people live, learn, work, play, worship and age. They affect a wide range of health, functions and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. SDOH include, but are not limited to, food insecurity, loneliness and social isolation, housing quality and instability, transportation, financial strain, employment and working conditions.

### **Identifying and screening for SDOH and health-related social needs**

Addressing social health needs alongside clinical needs improves the whole-person health of your patients. During annual wellness exams and regular appointments with patients, incorporate the screenings built into the electronic health record (EHR).

If your EHR doesn't have a screening tool, incorporate the AHC screening (Accountable Health Communities Health-Related Social Needs Screening Tool – Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation [CMMI]).

### **Guidance on coding for SDOH**

Guidance on using SDOH ICD-10-CM codes for persons with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances, includes:<sup>3</sup>

- Codes for SDOH should be only reported as secondary diagnoses.
- Code assignment may be based on medical record documentation from nonphysician clinicians involved in the care of the patient who are not the patient's provider (e.g., social workers, community health workers, case managers or nurses) since this information represents social information, rather than medical diagnoses.
- Patient self-reported documentation may be used to assign codes as long as the information is signed off by and incorporated into the medical record by either a clinician or provider.

### **Resources for help and support**

Helping your patients connect with national and local assistance programs can help provide the support they need. Available resources can be found at [Populationhealth.humana.com/resources](https://populationhealth.humana.com/resources).

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#### References

1. Kaplan R, Spittel M, David D (Eds). Population Health: Behavioral and Social Science Insights. AHRQ Publication No. 15-0002. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, National Institutes of Health; July 2015.
2. NEJM Catalyst, SDOH, December 2017, <https://catalyst.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/CAT.17.0312>
3. ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting FY 2021, [https://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health\\_Statistics/NCHS/Publications/ICD10CM/2022/10cmguidelines-FY2022-7-2022-7-15-21-update-508.pdf](https://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/Publications/ICD10CM/2022/10cmguidelines-FY2022-7-2022-7-15-21-update-508.pdf)

## Coding for SDOH

It is a best practice to document patient screening results in the EHR/EMR so you and your care team can track patient progress over time and communicate screening results to the patient's health insurer. By using ICD-10-CM codes in categories Z55–Z65 (like those below), you are able to provide clear documentation that's interoperable across payer systems. The [Gravity Project](#) offers an online resource with coding guideline assistance for specific SDOH domains.<sup>4</sup>

### NEW! ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting for FY 2022

Oct. 1, 2021 – Sept. 30, 2022

**Social determinants of health codes are located primarily in the Z code categories below. This list of codes is incomplete and shows only the series available for your use. Please consult your ICD-10 book for full codes.**

- Z55 Problems related to education and literacy
  - Z55.1 Schooling unavailable and unattainable
  - Z55.5 less than a high school diploma
- Z56 Problems related to employment and unemployment
- Z57 Occupational exposure to risk factors
- Z58 Problems related to physical environment
  - Z58.6 Inadequate drinking-water supply
- Z59 Problems related to housing and economic circumstances
  - Z59.Ø Homelessness
    - Z59.ØØ Homelessness, unspecified
    - Z59.Ø1 Sheltered homelessness
    - Z59.Ø2 Unsheltered homelessness
  - Z59.4 Lack of adequate food
    - Z59.41 Food insecurity
  - Z59.5 Extreme poverty
  - Z59.6 Low income
  - Z59.7 Insufficient social insurance and welfare support
  - Z59.8 Other problems related to housing and economic circumstances
    - Z59.81 Housing instability, housed
      - Z59.811 Housing instability, housed, with risk of homelessness
      - Z59.812 Housing instability, housed, homelessness in past 12 months
      - Z59.819 Housing instability, housed unspecified
- Z6Ø Problems related to social environment [loneliness/social isolation]
  - Z6Ø.2 Problems related to living alone
  - Z6Ø.4 Social exclusion and rejection (exclusion and rejection on the basis of personal characteristics, such as unusual physical appearance, illness or behavior)
- Z62 Problems related to upbringing
- Z63 Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances [inadequate social support]
  - Z63.8 Other specified problems related to primary support group
  - Z63.9 Problems related to primary support group, unspecified
- Z64 Problems related to certain psychosocial circumstances
- Z65 Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances
- Z91\* Personal risk factors, not elsewhere classified
  - Z91.1 Patient's noncompliance with medical treatment and regimen
  - Z91.12Ø Patient's intentional underdosing of medication regimen due to financial hardship

\*Not included in SDOH code category but may be used to document "factors influencing health status and contact with health services."

Assessment and documentation of social risk factors also effect the complexity of medical decision-making (MDM). As of Jan. 1, 2021, CPT® Evaluation and Management (E/M) Guidelines consider having diagnosis or treatment significantly limited by SDOH to be indicative of a "moderate" level of MDM related to Office or Other Outpatient Codes 99202–99215.<sup>3</sup>

4. The Gravity Project, May 2021, <https://confluence.hl7.org/display/GRAV/Terminology+Workstream+Dashboard>  
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