

SDOH “Z-Codes”

Impact of Accurate Data Capture for Removing Barriers



What are Social
Determinates of
Health?

Why are they
Important to
Your
Organization?

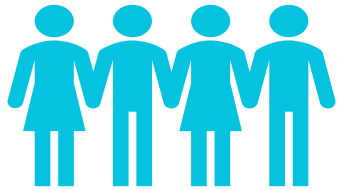
How to
Get it Right.



PRESENTER

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Agenda



Overview of SDOH-
Social Determinants
of Health



SDOH: *Documentation*
Best Practices



SDOH *ICD-10-CM*
Coding Capture Best
Practices



[Healthy People 2030 SDOH](#)

Social Determinants of Health-SDOH

Examples of SDOH include:

- Safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods
- Racism, discrimination, and violence
- Education, job opportunities, and income
- Access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities
- Polluted air and water
- Language and literacy skills

CMS Data Highlight Z-Codes: Traditional Medicare



DATA HIGHLIGHT
NO. 24 | SEPTEMBER 2021

Utilization of Z Codes for Social Determinants of Health among Medicare Fee-for-Service Beneficiaries, 2019

Background

Healthy People 2030 defines social determinants of health as “the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.” These determinants are now widely recognized as important predictors of access to and engagement in health care, as well as health outcomes (Artiga & Hinton, 2018). Positive social, as well as economic and environmental, conditions are associated with a wide array of positive or improved patient medical outcomes and lower or reduced costs, while worse conditions negatively affect health and health-related outcomes, e.g. hospital readmissions rates, length of hospital stay, and use of post-acute care services (Green & Zook, 2019; Kangovi, Shreya, & Grande, 2011; Virapongse & Misky, 2018). According to the 2016 National Academies of Medicine (NAM) report (Adler et al., 2016), the collection of social, economic, and environmental data in an electronic health record (EHR) format is necessary to empower providers to identify and track psychosocial and economic hardships faced by their patients. The collection of

Key Findings:

Among the 33.1 million continuously enrolled Medicare FFS beneficiaries in 2019, **1.59%** had claims with Z codes, as compared to **1.31%** in 2016.

The 5 most utilized Z codes were:

- 1) **Z59.0** Homelessness
- 2) **Z63.4** Disappearance and death of family member
- 3) **Z60.2** Problems related to living alone
- 4) **Z59.3** Problems related to living in a residential institution
- 5) **Z63.0** Problems in relationship with spouse or partner

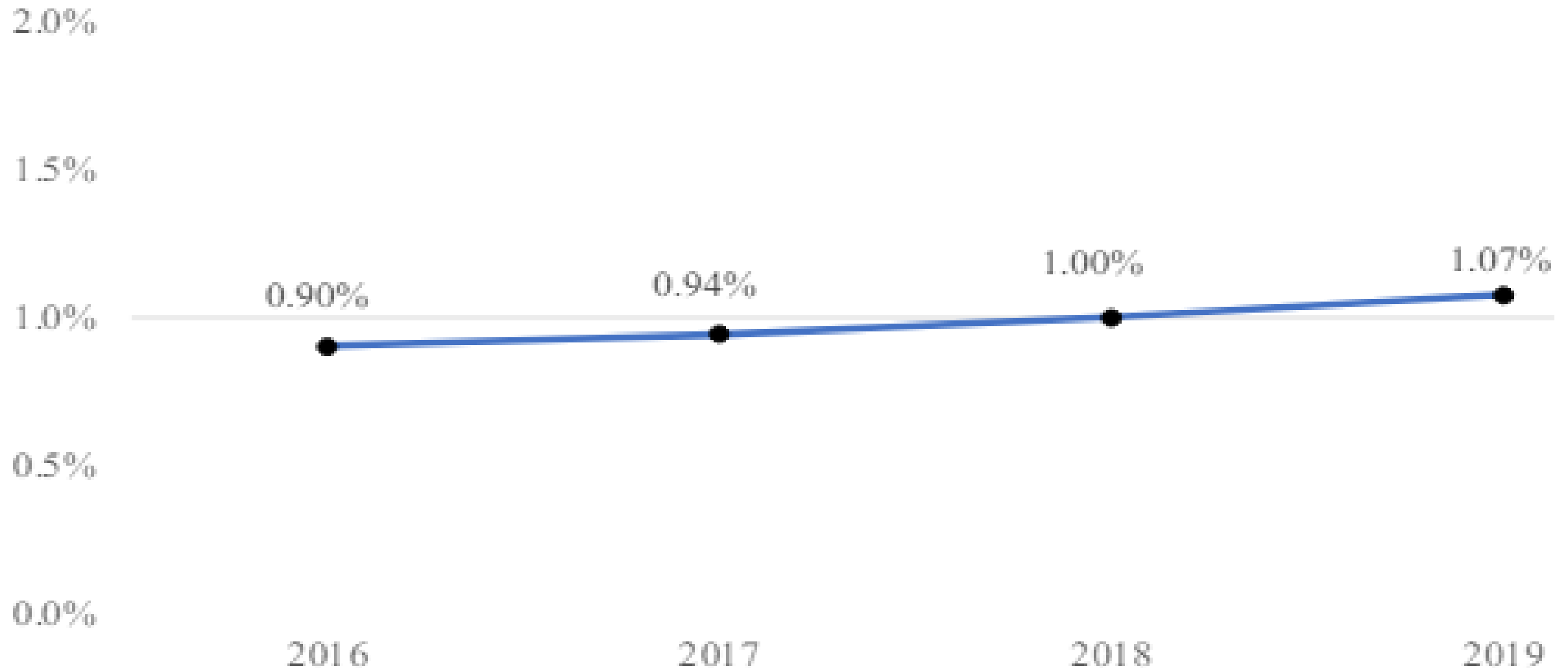
Beneficiaries dually eligible for Medicare and full-benefit Medicaid were overrepresented among the top 5 Z code claims.

Beneficiaries in rural areas were overrepresented (39.7%) among those with a **Z59.3** – Problems related to living in a residential institution claim.

CMS Data Highlight Z-Codes: Medicare Advantage



Figure 1: Percent of MA enrollees with at least one claim with Z code, 2016-2019



Newly Released Study Data



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NEWS RELEASES

Media Advisory

Monday, March 31, 2025

Social factors help explain worse cardiovascular health among adults in rural vs. urban communities

NIH-funded study reveals variables, such as poverty and education, that may underpin higher rates of heart disease and its risk factors.

[NIH Social Factors Explain Worse Cardiovascular Health Among Adults in Rural vs. Urban Communities](#)

ICD-10-CM Codes and Sub-Codes Related to SDOH



<u>ICD-10-CM Code Category</u>	<u>Problems/Risk Factors Included in Category</u>	<u>Number of Sub-Codes</u>
Z55 – Problems related to education and literacy	Illiteracy, schooling unavailable, underachievement in a school, educational maladjustment and discord with teachers and classmates.	9
Z56 – Problems related to employment and unemployment	Unemployment, change of job, threat of job loss, stressful work schedule, discord with boss and workmates, uncongenial work environment, sexual harassment on the job, and military deployment status	11
Z57 – Occupational exposure to risk factors	Occupational exposure to noise, radiation, dust, environmental tobacco smoke, toxic agents in agriculture, toxic agents in other industries, extreme temperature, and vibration.	11
Z58 – Problems related to physical environment	Inadequate drinking water supply, lack of safe drinking water	3
Z59 – Problems related to housing and economic circumstances	Homelessness, inadequate housing, discord with neighbors, lodgers and landlord, problems related to living in residential institutions, lack of adequate food, extreme poverty, low income, insufficient social insurance and welfare support, housing instability/foreclosure	24

ICD-10-CM Codes and Sub-Codes Related to SDOH



<u>ICD-10-CM Code Category</u>	<u>Problems/Risk Factors Included in Category</u>	<u>Number of Sub-Codes</u>
Z60 – Problems related to social environment	Adjustment to life-cycle transitions, living alone, acculturation difficulty, social exclusion and rejection, target of adverse discrimination and persecution.	7
Z62 – Problems related to upbringing	Inadequate parental supervision, overprotection, upbringing away from parents, hostility toward child, excessive parental pressure, abuse, parent-child conflict, sibling rivalry	28
Z63 – Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances	Absence of family member, disappearance and death of family member, disruption of family by separation and divorce, dependent relative needing care at home, stressful life events affecting family and household, stress on family due to return of family member from military deployment, alcoholism and drug addiction in family.	12
Z64 – Problems related to certain psychosocial circumstances	Unwanted pregnancy, multiparity, and discord with counselors.	3
Z65 – Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances	Conviction in civil and criminal proceedings without imprisonment, imprisonment and other incarceration, release from prison, other legal circumstances, victim of crime and terrorism, and exposure to disaster, war and other hostilities.	8

ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines- 2025



Section I. Conventions, general coding guidelines and chapter specific guidelines

B. General Coding Guidelines

14. Documentation by Clinicians Other than the Patient's Provider

- Code assignment is based on the documentation by the patient's provider (i.e., physician or other qualified healthcare practitioner legally accountable for establishing the patient's diagnosis). [There are a few exceptions](#) when code assignment may be based on medical record documentation from clinicians who are not the patient's provider (i.e., physician or other qualified healthcare practitioner legally accountable for establishing the patient's diagnosis). In this context, ["clinicians" other than the patient's provider](#) refer to healthcare professionals permitted, based on regulatory or accreditation requirements or internal hospital policies, to document in a patient's official medical record.
- These exceptions include codes for:
 - Body Mass Index (BMI) • Depth of non-pressure chronic ulcers • Pressure ulcer stage • Coma scale • NIH stroke scale (NIHSS) • [Social determinants of health \(SDOH\) classified to Chapter 21](#) • Laterality • Blood alcohol level • Underimmunization status
- This information is typically, or may be, documented by other clinicians involved in the care of the patient (e.g., a dietitian often documents the BMI, a nurse often documents the pressure ulcer stages, and an emergency medical technician often documents the coma scale). However, the associated diagnosis (such as overweight, obesity, acute stroke, pressure ulcer, or a condition classifiable to category F10, Alcohol related disorders) must be documented by the patient's provider. If there is conflicting medical record documentation, either from the same clinician or different clinicians, the patient's provider should be queried for clarification.
- The BMI, coma scale, NIHSS, blood alcohol level codes, codes for social determinants of health and under-immunization status should only be reported as [secondary diagnoses](#)

ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines- 2025



Section I. Conventions, general coding guidelines and chapter specific guidelines

C. Chapter Specific Coding Guidelines; Chapter 21: Factors influencing health status and contact with health services (Z00-Z99)

17. Social Determinants of Health

- Social determinants of health (SDOH) codes describing social problems, conditions, or risk factors that influence a patient's health should be assigned when this information is documented in the patient's medical record. Assign as many SDOH codes as are necessary to describe all of the social problems, conditions, or risk factors documented during the current episode of care. For example, a patient who lives alone may suffer an acute injury temporarily impacting their ability to perform routine activities of daily living.
- When documented as such, this would support assignment of code Z60.2, Problems related to living alone. However, merely living alone, without documentation of a risk or unmet need for assistance at home, would not support assignment of code Z60.2. Documentation by a clinician (or patient-reported information that is signed off by a clinician) that the patient expressed concerns with access and availability of food would support assignment of code Z59.41, Food insecurity. Similarly, medical record documentation indicating the patient is homeless would support assignment of a code from subcategory Z59.0-, Homelessness.
- For social determinants of health classified to chapter 21...[code assignment may be based on medical record documentation from clinicians involved in the care of the patient who are not the patient's provider since this information represents social information, rather than medical diagnoses](#). For example, coding professionals may utilize documentation of social information from social workers, community health workers, case managers, or nurses, if their documentation is included in the official medical record.
- [Patient self-reported documentation may be used to assign codes for social determinants of health](#), as long as the patient self-reported information is signed-off by and incorporated into the medical record by either a clinician or provider.

ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines- 2025



Section I. Conventions, general coding guidelines and chapter specific guidelines

C. Chapter Specific Coding Guidelines; Chapter 21: Factors influencing health status and contact with health services (Z00-Z99)

17. Social Determinants of Health (cont.)

- Social determinants of health codes are located primarily in these Z code categories:
 - Z55 Problems related to education and literacy
 - Z56 Problems related to employment and unemployment
 - Z57 Occupational exposure to risk factors
 - Z58 Problems related to physical environment
 - Z59 Problems related to housing and economic circumstances
 - Z60 Problems related to social environment
 - Z62 Problems related to upbringing
 - Z63 Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances
 - Z64 Problems related to certain psychosocial circumstances
 - Z65 Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances

ICD-10-CM Codes and Sub-Codes Related to SDOH



Insufficient Social Insurance and Welfare Support

Z59.71 Insufficient health insurance coverage

Inadequate social insurance Insufficient social insurance

No health insurance coverage

Z59.72 Insufficient welfare support

Inadequate welfare support

SDOH Documentation Best Practices



- [Assess current landscape](#) for provider and staff documentation of SDOH
- [Establish organizational policies](#) around capturing SDOH at each encounter
- [Meet with your EHR/Informatics/IT](#) teams to create best practices within the provider workflow to enable actionable data collection
- [Educate staff](#) on the need to screen, document and code data on patients' SDOH needs.
- [Ask patients about their SDOH needs](#). Patients may not know to discuss non-medical issues with their provider and may need to be prompted.
- [Use SDOH screening tools](#) and/or health risk assessments
- [Document SDOH data](#) in the problem list, diagnosis list, patient history or provider notes



SDOH Follow-up Best Practices

- **Review SDOH Data:** Understand the common barriers your patients are facing
- **Identify Resources:** Create a directory of resources in your community to address SDOH and social needs
- **Referrals:** Connect patients with local services
- **Track:** Follow-up and track the outcome of each referral to confirm if your intervention is working.
 - Use this tracking information to identify gaps in your community resources and find ways to fill them
- **Reach Out:** Ask your community organizations for guidance and support
 - CAH Community Health Needs Assessments
 - FindHelp.org
 - Local health departments
 - United Way

1. Do you have difficulty understanding the English language?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Do you ever have a time during the month when you don't have enough food for you or your family?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. Do you have trouble paying for housing or your electric/heating bills?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
4. Are you and/or your family currently homeless or at risk of becoming homeless?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
5. Do you need help with transportation for medical appointments, work or getting things needed for daily living?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
6. Have you or anyone in your family experienced or observed any form of abuse, including physical, emotional, verbal, sexual abuse or neglect?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Do you or anyone in your family feel unsafe at home, school or work?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
8. How often do you see or talk to people that you care about and feel close to? (For example: talking to friends on the phone, visiting friends or family)
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly
9. What is the highest level of schooling that you have completed?
<input type="checkbox"/> Didn't finish High School <input type="checkbox"/> High School or GED <input type="checkbox"/> College
10. What is your current work situation?
<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Disabled <input type="checkbox"/> Retired
11. Have you been unable to get your medication because there wasn't enough money to pay for it?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No



Sample SDOH Screening Questions

Sample SDOH Screening Codes



Question 1: Do you have difficulty understanding the English language?

- Z60.3 Acculturation difficulty**
 - Problem with migration
 - Problem with social transplantation

Question 2: Do you ever have a time during the month where you don't have enough food for your family?

- Z59.4 Lack of adequate food**
 - Excludes2:** deprivation of food (T73.0)
 - effects of hunger (T73.0)
 - inappropriate diet or eating habits (Z72.4)
 - malnutrition (E40-E46)
- Z59.41 Food insecurity**
- Z59.48 Other specified lack of adequate food**
 - Inadequate food
 - Lack of food

Question 3: Do you have trouble paying for housing and your electric/heating bills?

- Z59.86 Financial insecurity**
 - Bankruptcy
 - Burdensome debt
 - Economic strain
 - Financial strain
 - Money problems
 - Running out of money
 - Unable to make ends meet

- Z59.87 Material hardship due to limited financial resources, not elsewhere classified**
 - Material deprivation due to limited financial resources
 - Unable to obtain adequate childcare due to limited financial resources
 - Unable to obtain adequate clothing due to limited financial resources
 - Unable to obtain adequate utilities due to limited financial resources
 - Unable to obtain basic needs due to limited financial resources

Sample SDOH Screening Codes

Question 4: Are you and/or your family currently homeless or at risk of being homeless?

Z59.0 Homelessness

Z59.00 Homelessness unspecified

Z59.01 Sheltered homelessness

Doubled up

Living in a shelter such as: motel, scattered site housing, temporary or transitional living situation

Z59.02 Unsheltered homelessness

Residing in place not meant for human habitation such as: abandoned buildings, cars parks, sidewalk
Deciding on the street

Z59.8 Other problems related to housing and economic circumstances

Z59.81 Housing instability, housed

Foreclosure on home loan

Past due on rent or mortgage

Unwanted multiple moves in the last 12 months

Z59.811 Housing instability, housed, with risk of homelessness

Imminent risk of homelessness

Z59.812 Housing instability, housed, homelessness in past 12 months

Z59.819 Housing instability, housed unspecified

Question 5: Do you need help with transportation to medical appointments, work or getting things needed for daily living?

Z59.82 Transportation insecurity

Excessive transportation time

Inaccessible transportation

Inadequate transportation

Lack of transportation

Unaffordable transportation

Unreliable transportation

Unsafe transportation



Sample SDOH Screening Codes

Question 6: Have you or anyone in your family experienced or observed any form of abuse, including physical, emotional, verbal, sexual abuse or neglect?

Z60.4 Social exclusion and rejection

Exclusion and rejection on the basis of personal characteristics, such as unusual physical appearance, illness or behavior.
Social isolation

Excludes1: target of adverse discrimination such as for racial or religious reasons (Z60.5)

Z60.5 Target of (perceived) adverse discrimination and persecution

Z62.3 Hostility towards and scapegoating of child

Z62.6 Inappropriate (excessive) parental pressure

Z62.8 Other specified problems related to upbringing

Z62.81 Personal history of abuse in childhood

Personal history of abuse in adolescence

Z62.810 Personal history of physical and sexual abuse in childhood

Excludes1: current child physical abuse (T74.12, T76.12)
current child sexual abuse (T74.22, T76.22)

Z62.811 Personal history of psychological abuse in childhood

Excludes1: current child psychological abuse (T74.32, T76.32)

Z62.812 Personal history of neglect in childhood

Excludes1: current child neglect (T74.02, T76.02)

Z62.813 Personal history of forced labor or sexual exploitation in childhood

Z62.814 Personal history of child financial abuse

Excludes1: current child financial abuse (T74.A2)

Z62.815 Personal history of intimate partner abuse in childhood

Excludes2: adult and child abuse, neglect and other maltreatment, confirmed (T74.-)

Z62.819 Personal history of unspecified abuse in childhood

Z63 Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances

Excludes2: maltreatment syndrome (T74.-, T76)

parent-child problems (Z62.-)

problems related to negative life events in childhood (Z62.-)

problems related to upbringing (Z62.-)

Z63.0 Problems in relationship with spouse or partner

Relationship distress with spouse or intimate partner

Excludes1: counseling for spousal or partner abuse problems (Z69.1)
counseling related to sexual attitude, behavior, and orientation (Z70.-)

Z63.1 Problems in relationship with in-laws



Sample SDOH Screening Codes

Question 7: Do you or anyone in your family feel unsafe at home, school or work?

Z59 codes for homelessness or inadequate housing as well as these codes.

Z55.4 Educational maladjustment and discord with teachers and classmates

Z57 Occupational exposure to risk factors

Z57.0 Occupational exposure to noise

Z57.1 Occupational exposure to radiation

Z57.2 Occupational exposure to dust

Z57.3 Occupational exposure to other air contaminants

Z57.31 Occupational exposure to environmental tobacco smoke

Excludes2: exposure to environmental tobacco smoke (Z77.22)

Z57.39 Occupational exposure to other air contaminants

Z57.4 Occupational exposure to toxic agents in agriculture

Occupational exposure to solids, liquids, gases or vapors in agriculture

Z57.5 Occupational exposure to toxic agents in other industries

Occupational exposure to solids, liquids, gases or vapors in other industries

Z57.6 Occupational exposure to extreme temperature

Z57.7 Occupational exposure to vibration

Z57.8 Occupational exposure to other risk factors

Z56.3 Stressful work schedule

Z56.4 Discord with boss and workmates

Z56.5 Uncongenial work environment

Difficult conditions at work

Z56.6 Other physical and mental strain related to work

Z56.8 Other problems related to employment

Z56.81 Sexual harassment on the job

Z59.2 Discord with neighbors, lodgers and landlord

Z60.4 Social exclusion and rejection

Exclusion and rejection on the basis of personal characteristics, such as unusual physical appearance, illness or behavior.
Social isolation

Excludes1: target of adverse discrimination such as for racial or religious reasons (Z60.5)

Z60.5 Target of (perceived) adverse discrimination and persecution

Z62.3 Hostility towards and scapegoating of child

Z62.6 Inappropriate (excessive) parental pressure

Z62.8 Other specified problems related to upbringing

Z62.82 Parent-child conflict

Z62.820 Parent-biological child conflict

Parent-child problem NOS

Z62.821 Parent-adopted child conflict

Z62.822 Parent-foster child conflict

Z62.823 Parent-step child conflict

Z62.83 Non-parental relative or guardian-child conflict

Z62.831 Non-parental relative-child conflict

Grandparent-child conflict

Kinship-care child conflict

Non-parental relative legal guardian-child conflict

Other relative-child conflict

Excludes1: group home staff-child conflict (Z62.833)

Z62.832 Non-relative guardian-child conflict

Excludes1: group home staff-child conflict (Z62.833)

Z62.833 Group home staff-child conflict

Z62.89 Other specified problems related to upbringing

Z63 Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances

Excludes2: maltreatment syndrome (T74.-, T76)

parent-child problems (Z62.-)

problems related to negative life events in childhood (Z62.-)

problems related to upbringing (Z62.-)

Z63.0 Problems in relationship with spouse or partner

Relationship distress with spouse or intimate partner

Excludes1: counseling for spousal or partner abuse problems (Z69.1)

counseling related to sexual attitude, behavior, and orientation (Z70.-)

Z63.1 Problems in relationship with in-laws

Z63.5 Disruption of family by separation and divorce

Marital estrangement

Z63.6 Dependent relative needing care at home

Z63.7 Other stressful life events affecting family and household

Z63.71 Stress on family due to return of family member from military deployment

Individual or family affected by family member having returned from military deployment (current or past conflict)

Z63.72 Alcoholism and drug addiction in family

Z63.79 Other stressful life events affecting family and household

Anxiety (normal) about sick person in family

Health problems within family

Ill or disturbed family member

Isolated family

Z63.8 Other specified problems related to primary support group

Family discord NOS

Family estrangement NOS

High expressed emotional level within family

Inadequate family support NOS

Inadequate or distorted communication within family



Sample SDOH Screening Codes

Question 8: How often do you see or talk to people that you care about and feel close to?

Z59.3 Problems related to living in residential institution

Z60 Problems related to social environment

Z60.0 Problems of adjustment to life-cycle transitions

Empty nest syndrome

Phase of life problem

Problem with adjustment to retirement [pension]

Z60.2 Problems related to living alone

Z60.4 Social exclusion and rejection

Exclusion and rejection on the basis of personal characteristics, such as unusual physical appearance, illness or behavior.

Social isolation

Z60.8 Other problems related to social environment

Inadequate social support

Lack of emotional support

Z63.3 Absence of family member

Excludes1: absence of family member due to disappearance and death (Z63.4)
absence of family member due to separation and divorce (Z63.5)

Z63.31 Absence of family member due to military deployment

Individual or family affected by other family member being on military deployment

Excludes1: family disruption due to return of family member from military deployment (Z63.71)

Z63.32 Other absence of family member

Z63.4 Disappearance and death of family member

Assumed death of family member

Bereavement

Z63.5 Disruption of family by separation and divorce

Marital estrangement



Sample SDOH Screening Codes

Question 9: What is the highest level of schooling that you have completed?

Z55 Problems related to education and literacy

Excludes1: disorders of psychological development (F80-F89)

Z55.0 Illiteracy and low-level literacy

Z55.1 Schooling unavailable and unattainable

Z55.2 Failed school examinations

Z55.3 Underachievement in school

Z55.4 Educational maladjustment and discord with teachers and classmates

Z55.5 Less than a high school diploma

No general equivalence degree (GED)

Z55.6 Problems related to health literacy

Difficulty understanding health related information

Difficulty understanding medication instructions

Problem completing medical forms

Z55.8 Other problems related to education and literacy

Problems related to inadequate teaching

Z55.9 Problems related to education and literacy, unspecified

Academic problems NOS



Sample SDOH Screening Codes

Question 10: What is your current work situation?

Z56 Problems related to employment and unemployment

Excludes2: occupational exposure to risk factors (Z57.-)
problems related to housing and economic circumstances (Z59.-)

Z56.0 Unemployment, unspecified

Z56.1 Change of job

Z56.2 Threat of job loss

Z56.3 Stressful work schedule

Z56.4 Discord with boss and workmates

Z56.5 Uncongenial work environment

Difficult conditions at work

Z56.6 Other physical and mental strain related to work

Z56.8 Other problems related to employment

Z56.81 Sexual harassment on the job

Z56.82 Military deployment status

Individual (civilian or military) currently deployed in theater or in support of military war, peacekeeping and humanitarian operations

Z56.89 Other problems related to employment

Z56.9 Unspecified problems related to employment

Occupational problems NOS



Sample SDOH Screening Codes

Question 11: Have you been unable to get your medication because there was not enough money to pay for it?

Z59.5 Extreme poverty

Z59.6 Low income

Z59.7 Insufficient social insurance and welfare support

Insufficient social and welfare insurance

- **Z59.71** Insufficient health insurance coverage

Inadequate social insurance

Insufficient social insurance

No health insurance coverage

- **Z59.72** Insufficient welfare support

Inadequate welfare support



Z59.86 Financial insecurity

Bankruptcy

Burdensome debt

Economic strain

Financial strain

Money problems

Running out of money

Unable to make ends meet

Excludes2: extreme poverty (Z59.5)

low income (Z59.6)

material hardship, not elsewhere classified (Z59.87)

Z59.87 Material hardship due to limited financial resources, not elsewhere classified

Material deprivation due to limited financial resources

Unable to obtain adequate childcare due to limited financial resources

Unable to obtain adequate clothing due to limited financial resources

Unable to obtain adequate utilities due to limited financial resources

Unable to obtain basic needs due to limited financial resources

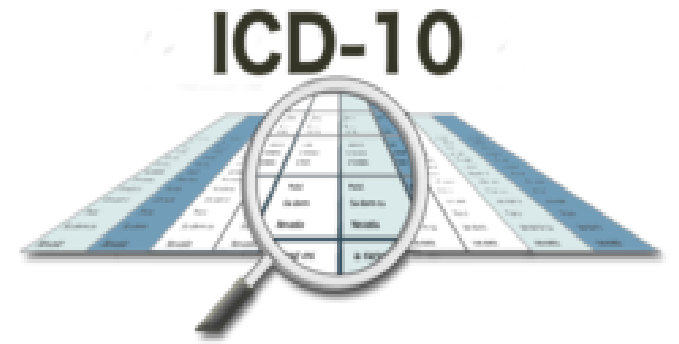
Excludes2: extreme poverty (Z59.5)

financial insecurity, not elsewhere classified (Z59.86)

low income (Z59.6)

What are some SDOH Coding Capture Best Practices?

- Educate coders to look for SDOH data within the problem list, diagnosis list, patient history or provider notes
- Use self-reported data to assign Z codes
- Use information documented in the patient's health care record by any member of the care team
- Z codes are not "optional"



New in 2024: HCPCS II Code for SDOH Assessment



● **G0136:** Administration of a standardized, evidence-based social determinants of health risk assessment tool, 5-15 minutes. “A review of the individual’s SDOH or identified social risk factors that influence the diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions, 5-15 min; no more frequently than every 6 months.”

- Note for RHCs/FQHCs: This code will not generate an add-on payment when performed as part of an RHC/FQHC encounter, however it will increase your 20% coinsurance due from patient.
- It was added to Medicare telehealth list (including via audio-only) and can be billed by RHC/FQHC as G2025 when performed as part of a telehealth encounter.

CMS Billing Tip:

SDOH Question 3: Is HCPCS code G0136 intended to be used with all Medicare patients, or just when a physician or practitioner determines it is relevant for the patient? a. The SDOH risk assessment is intended to be used when a practitioner has reason to believe there are unmet SDOH needs that could interfere with the practitioner's diagnosis and treatment of a condition or illness. HCPCS code G0136 is not designed for routine screening. Instead, it is an assessment of one or more known or suspected SDOH needs that may interfere with the practitioners' diagnosis or treatment of the patient. (Example will be “Yes” answer that triggers a need).

[CMS Health Related Social Needs FAQ:](#)



Annual Wellness Visit with SDOH Assessment



- A social determinants of health (SDOH) risk assessment is now an optional annual wellness visit (AWV) element
- The eligibility and billing requirements for doing the SDOH as part of the AWV
- The SDOH risk assessment with the AWV must be performed by:
 - Physician who's a doctor of medicine or osteopathy • Physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or clinical nurse specialist • Medical professional or a team of such medical professionals, working under the direct supervision of a physician
- No coinsurance or deductible when performed with AWV
- When you provide the SDOH risk assessment as an additional element of the AWV, report HCPCS code G0136 for the SDOH risk assessment with **Modifier -33**, with the same DOS on the same claim as G0438 or G0439.

Reporting ICD-10-CM Codes

Outpatient and Professional Services Claims



CMS 1500 (837P) –
Allows up to 12 ICD-
10-CM codes

Older
software/claims
scrubbers only
allow *4-update your
software*

CMS 1450 or UB-04
(837I) – Allows up to
25 ICD-10-CM codes

RHC/FQHCs bill
CMS on UB-04
claims



Performing Coding Audits: Uncover Learning and Revenue Opportunities

- Excellent educational opportunity for coding, billing, and clinical staff
- Improved relations between HIM/billing staff, and physicians, all revenue cycle departments
- Correct reimbursement to the organization
- Protect against fraudulent claims and billing activity
- Identify and correct problem areas before insurance or government payers challenge inappropriate coding
- Improved operational efficiency
- Improve data quality for external reporting and internal use
- Enhancement of current internal auditing efforts

Review: Requirements for SDOH Code Assignment

- All first listed and secondary diagnosis codes be reported to the highest level of specificity.
- The medical record validates the diagnoses codes that have been reported by the Physician or care team.
- Document and report all social determinates of health data, either self-reported or captured by any member of the care team using Z codes.



USING Z CODES:

The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Data Journey to Better Outcomes

What are
Z
codes

SDOH-related Z codes ranging from Z55-Z65 are the ICD-10-CM diagnosis codes used to document SDOH data (e.g., housing, food insecurity, transportation, etc.).

SDOH are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.



Step 1 Collect SDOH Data

Any member of a person's care team can collect SDOH data during any encounter.

- Includes providers, social workers, community health workers, case managers, patient navigators, and nurses.
- Can be collected at intake through health risk assessments, screening tools, person-provider interaction, and individual self-reporting.

Step 2 Document SDOH Data

Data are recorded in a person's paper or electronic health record (EHR).

- SDOH data may be documented in the problem or diagnosis list, patient or client history, or provider notes.
- Care teams may collect more detailed SDOH data than current Z codes allow. These data should be retained.
- Efforts are ongoing to close Z code gaps and standardize SDOH data.

Step 3 Map SDOH Data to Z Codes

Assistance is available from the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting.¹

- Coding, billing, and EHR systems help coders assign standardized codes (e.g., Z codes).
- Coders can assign SDOH Z codes based on self-reported data and/or information documented by any member of the care team if their documentation is included in the official medical record.²

Step 4 Use SDOH Z Code Data

Data analysis can help improve quality, care coordination, and experience of care.

- Identify individuals' social risk factors and unmet needs.
- Inform health care and services, follow-up, and discharge planning.
- Trigger referrals to social services that meet individuals' needs.
- Track referrals between providers and social service organizations.

Step 5 Report SDOH Z Code Data Findings

SDOH data can be added to key reports for executive leadership and Boards of Directors to inform value-based care opportunities.

- Findings can be shared with social service organizations, providers, health plans, and consumer/patient advisory boards to identify unmet needs.
- A [Disparities Impact Statement](#) can be used to identify opportunities for advancing health equity.

[CMS SDOH Z Code Infographic](#)



USING SDOH Z CODES

Can Enhance Your Quality Improvement Initiatives



Health Care Administrators

Understand how SDOH data can be gathered and tracked using Z codes.

- Select an SDOH screening tool.
- Identify workflows that minimize staff burden.
- Provide training to support data collection.
- Consider EHRs that facilitate data collection and coding.
- Decide what Z code data to use and monitor.

Develop a plan to use SDOH Z code data to:

- Enhance patient care.
- Improve care coordination and referrals.
- Support quality measurement.
- Identify community/population needs.
- Support planning and implementation of social needs interventions.
- Monitor SDOH intervention effectiveness.



Health Care Team

Use a SDOH screening tool.

- Follow best practices for collecting SDOH data in a sensitive and HIPAA-compliant manner.
- Consistently document standardized SDOH data in the EHR.
- Refer individuals to social service organizations and appropriate support services through local, state, and national resources.



Coding and Other Professionals

Follow the ICD-10-CM coding guidelines.³

- Use the CDC National Center for Health Statistics [ICD-10-CM Browser](#) tool to search for ICD-10-CM codes and information on code usage.⁴
- Assign all relevant SDOH Z codes to support quality improvement initiatives.

Z code Categories

- Z55** – Problems related to education and literacy
- Z56** – Problems related to employment and unemployment
- Z57** – Occupational exposure to risk factors
- Z58** – Problems related to physical environment
- Z59** – Problems related to housing and economic circumstances

- Z60** – Problems related to social environment
- Z62** – Problems related to upbringing
- Z63** – Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances
- Z64** – Problems related to certain psychosocial circumstances
- Z65** – Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances

This list is subject to revisions and additions to improve alignment with SDOH data elements.



[CMS SDOH
Z Code
Infographic](#)

IMPROVING THE COLLECTION OF Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Data with ICD-10-CM Z Codes



What Are Z Codes?

- SDOH-related Z codes range from ICD-10-CM categories Z55-Z65 and are used to document SDOH data (e.g., housing, food insecurity, lack of transportation)
- Z codes refer to factors influencing health status or reasons for contact with health services that are not classifiable elsewhere as diseases, injuries, or external causes



Using Z Codes for SDOH

- SDOH information can be collected before, during, or after a health care encounter through structured health risk assessments and screening tools
- These codes should be assigned only when the documentation specifies that the patient has an associated problem or risk factor that influences the patient's health
- Coding professionals may utilize documentation of social information from social workers, community health workers, case managers, or nurses, if their documentation is included in the official medical record



What Are SDOH & Why Collect Them?

- SDOH are the conditions in the environment where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks¹
- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that SDOH accounts for **30-55% of health outcomes**²



Collecting SDOH can improve equity in health care delivery and research by:

- Empowering providers to identify and address health disparities (e.g., care coordination and referrals)
- Supporting quality measurement
- Supporting planning and implementation of social needs interventions
- Identifying community and population needs
- Monitoring SDOH intervention effectiveness for patient outcomes
- Utilizing data to advocate for updating and creating new policies



ICD-10-CM Z Codes Update

- New SDOH Z codes may become effective each April 1 and October 1. New codes are announced prior to their effective date on [CDC website](#)
- Use the CDC National Center for Health Statistics [ICD-10-CM Browser tool](#) to search for all the current Z codes.
- Join the public process for SDOH code development and approval through the [ICD-10-CM Coordination and Maintenance Committee](#)

¹ Healthy People 2030 ² World Health Organization

[VIEW JOURNEY MAP](#)





Exhibit 1. Recent SDOH Z Code Categories and New Codes

Z55 – Problems related to education and literacy

- Z55.5 – Less than a high school diploma (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

NEW • Z55.6 – Problems related to health literacy

Z56 – Problems related to employment and unemployment

Z57 – Occupational exposure to risk factors

Z58 – Problems related to physical environment (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

- Z58.6 – Inadequate drinking-water supply (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

NEW • Z58.8 – Other problems related to physical environment

NEW • Z58.81 – Basic services unavailable in physical environment

NEW • Z58.89 – Other problems related to physical environment

Z59 – Problems related to housing and economic circumstances

- Z59.0 – Homelessness (Updated)
 - Z59.00 – Homelessness unspecified (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
 - Z59.01 – Sheltered homelessness (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
 - Z59.02 – Unsheltered homelessness (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
- Z59.1 – Inadequate Housing (Updated)
 - NEW** • Z59.10 – Inadequate housing, unspecified
 - NEW** • Z59.11 – Inadequate housing environmental temperature
 - NEW** • Z59.12 – Inadequate housing utilities
 - NEW** • Z59.19 – Other inadequate housing
- Z59.4 – Lack of adequate food (Updated)
 - Z59.41 – Food insecurity (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
 - Z59.48 – Other specified lack of adequate food (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
- Z59.8 – Other problems related to housing and economic circumstances (Updated)
 - Z59.81 – Housing instability, housed (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
 - Z59.811 – Housing instability, housed, with risk of homelessness (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

- Z59.812 – Housing instability, housed, homelessness in past 12 months (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

- Z59.819 – Housing instability, housed unspecified (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

- Z59.82 – Transportation insecurity (Added, Oct. 1, 2022)

- Z59.86 – Financial insecurity (Added, Oct. 1, 2022)

- Z59.87 – Material hardship due to limited financial resources, not elsewhere classified (Added, Oct. 1, 2022; Revised, April 1, 2023)

- Z59.89 – Other problems related to housing and economic circumstances (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

Z60 – Problems related to social environment

Z62 – Problems related to upbringing

- Z62.2 – Upbringing away from parents

NEW • Z62.23 – Child in custody of non-parental relative (Added, Oct. 1, 2023)

NEW • Z62.24 – Child in custody of non-relative guardian (Added, Oct. 1, 2023)

- Z62.8 – Other specified problems related to upbringing (Updated)

- Z62.81 – Personal history of abuse in childhood

NEW • Z62.814 – Personal history of child financial abuse

NEW • Z62.815 – Personal history of intimate partner abuse in childhood

- Z62.82 – Parent-child conflict

NEW • Z62.823 – Parent-step child conflict (Added, Oct. 1, 2023)

- Z62.83 – Non-parental relative or guardian-child conflict (Added Oct. 1, 2023)

NEW • Z62.831 – Non-parental relative-child conflict (Added Oct. 1, 2023)

NEW • Z62.832 – Non-relative guardian-child conflict (Added Oct. 1, 2023)

NEW • Z62.833 – Group home staff-child conflict (Added Oct. 1, 2023)

- Z62.89 – Other specified problems related to upbringing

NEW • Z62.892 – Runaway [from current living environment] (Added Oct. 1, 2023)

Z63 – Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances

Z64 – Problems related to certain psychosocial circumstance

Z65 – Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances

Useful References



- [AHA Value Initiative ICD-10-Code-Social Determinants of Health](#)
- [CDC Social Determinants of Health: Know What Affects Health](#)
- [CMS SDOH Z Code Infographic](#)
- [HHS Healthy People 2030 Social Determinants of Health](#)
- [ICD-10-CM 2025 Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting](#)
- [Improving the Collection of Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\) data with ICD-10-CM Z Codes](#)
- [Utilization of Z Codes for Social Determinants of Health among Medicare Fee-for-Service Beneficiaries, 2019](#)
- [Utilization of Z Codes for Social Determinants of Health Among Samples of Medicare Advantage Enrollees 2017 and 2019](#)



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