

## Coding spotlight - provider's guide to code social determinants of health

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### What are social determinants of health (SDOH)?

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines SDOH as “conditions in which people are born, grow, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the distribution of money, power and resources at global, national and local levels. The social determinants of health are mostly responsible for health inequalities.” Capturing SDOH is becoming a necessary element of documentation.

Article Attachments

[SDOH diagnosis code reference.pdf](#)  
application/pdf - 91.12 KB



### Official coding guidelines for SDOH — new update

For 2019, the *ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting* has been updated to allow reporting SDOH using the documentation of clinicians other than the patient's provider. Most of the patient-specific SDOH information is captured by ancillary staff supporting the physicians.

### **Do SDOH affect everyone?**

The SDOH codes are very powerful tools in capturing the complexity of patient populations and allowing application of more accurate care. These conditions affect patient care. This publicly reported data will also improve capture of conditions that impact readmission reduction and mortality metrics.

SDOH diagnosis codes are one of the few tools that are shared collectively to measure and evaluate SDOH on a national scale.

### **How can providers address SDOH issues for the members?**

- Using the CMS Screening Tool, which can be found at:
- <https://innovation.cms.gov/Files/worksheets/ahcm-screeningtool.pdf>
- Submitting ICD-10-CM codes from *Chapter 21 (Z00 to Z99)* to identify issues that may impact member health via claims

### **Coding SDOH**

SDOH codes are represented in ICD-10-CM code categories Z55 to Z65 — persons with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances. Codes in the Z55 to Z65 groupings include the following:

<b>Code grouping</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Z55 — Problems related to education and literacy</b>	Illiteracy/low level of literacy, schooling unavailable
<b>Z56 — Problems related to employment and unemployment</b>	Unemployment, change of job, threat loss, military deployment status, sexual harassment on the job
<b>Z57 — Occupational exposure to risk factors</b>	Occupational exposure to noise, radiation, dust, tobacco, toxic agents in agriculture, extreme temperature
<b>Z59 — Problems related to housing and economic circumstances</b>	Homelessness, inadequate housing, crowding with neighbors, extreme poverty, low income
<b>Z60 — Problems related to social environment</b>	Adjustment to lifestyle transition, problems with living alone, acculturation difficulty, social exclusion and rejection
<b>Z62 — Problems related to upbringing</b>	Inadequate parental supervisions and control, parental overprotection, institutional upbringing
<b>Z63 — Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances</b>	Problems with spousal or other relationships, absence of a family member, alcoholism, drug addiction in family
<b>Z64 — Problems related to certain psychosocial circumstances</b>	Problems with unwanted pregnancy, problems related to multiparity, discordance with counselors
<b>Z65 — Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances</b>	Conviction, imprisonment, victim of crime, terrorism

See attached for [SDOH diagnosis code reference](#).

### Resources

World Health Organization, About social determinants of health, found online at:

[https://www.who.int/social\\_determinants/sdh\\_definition/en](https://www.who.int/social_determinants/sdh_definition/en).

*ICD-10-CM Expert for Physicians*, the complete official code set,  
Optum360, LLC. 2020.

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