

Closing Gaps & Meeting Metrics

Coding Tips & Best Practices

February 2022

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)

Florida Blue Medicare appreciates the care and attention you provide to our members. To better track and address the social needs of our members, we recommend you incorporate Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) ICD-10 Z codes on the claims you submit to us. Any clinician (physician, nurse, social worker, community health worker, case manager, or other provider) can document a person's social needs.

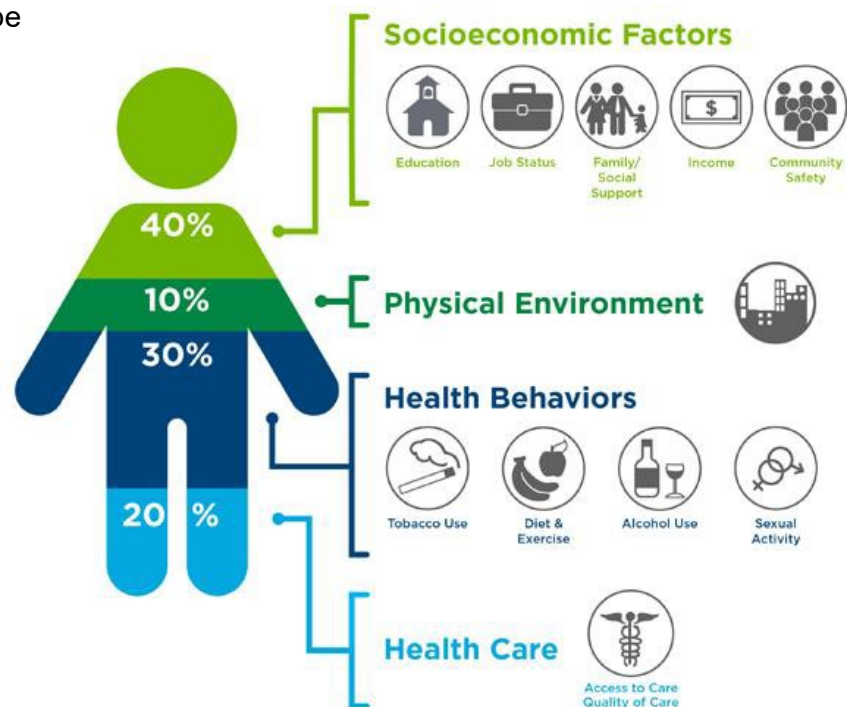
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines SDOH as circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, age, and the systems put into place to deal with illness.

These circumstances have a tremendous effect on one's health and can affect anyone, regardless of age, race or ethnicity. Numerous studies have shown economic status, social factors, and physical environment are key influencers in health outcomes.

What Goes into Your Health?

- 20% of a person's health and well-being is related to access to care and quality of services.
- The physical environment, social determinants and behavioral factors drive 80% of health outcomes.
- More specifically, that 80% can be broken down as follows:

- Roughly 40% is attributed to socioeconomic factors: education, job status, family/social support, income and community safety.
- 10% to physical environment: housing
- 30% to health behaviors: tobacco abuse, diet and exercise, alcohol use and sexual activity
- 20% to health care: access to care and quality of care



Source: Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement, Going Beyond Clinical Walls: Solving Complex Problems (October 2014)

The Bridgespan Group

Continued next page

Using Social Determinants of Health ICD-10 Codes

Each patient brings more to your office than the symptoms they present on the surface. Social determinants of health may affect a patient's ability or willingness to follow their recommended treatment plan. For this reason, it is important to adopt a "whole person" approach. Additionally, some patients' limited access to stable phone and mailing resources can lead to disruptions to their care. By working together, we can help remove barriers and improve the health and quality of life for our members.

The SDOH codes are powerful tools to capture the complexity of patient populations. These additional factors affecting a patient's health can justify higher levels of evaluation and management services, prolonged services, extended monitoring, risk adjustment payment methodologies, etc. Using ICD-10 Z code data, Florida Blue Medicare can improve our understanding of the unique social needs of our members and can help connect affected members with available resources.

Documenting SDOH

Code assignment is based on the documentation by the patient's provider (i.e., the physician or other qualified health care practitioner legally responsible for establishing the patient's diagnosis). Truly paint the picture of the "whole" patient anywhere on the progress note, as the entire record should be reviewed to collect adequate information to support these codes.

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. These codes include the following:

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

Continued next page

- Documentation can be used to assign Z codes as long as it meets requirements for inclusion in the patient's medical record based on regulatory requirements, accreditation requirements or internal hospital policies.
- If the patient's self-reported information is signed-off and incorporated into the health record by either a clinician or provider, it would be appropriate to assign codes from categories Z55-Z65, describing SDOH (Coding Clinic Fourth Quarter 2019, Pages 52-53).
- Z codes are used to report social determinants. Ensure the code is not on the "primary diagnosis" list only.
- Assign as many codes as necessary to fully explain each health care encounter. Since patient history information may be very limited, use any available documentation to assign the appropriate external cause of morbidity and Z codes.

SDOH Diagnosis Code Reference

Problems related to education and literacy

- 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
- Z55.8 – Other problems related to education and literacy
- Z55.9 – Problems related to education and literacy, unspecified

Problems related to employment and unemployment

- 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
- Z56.6 – Other physical and mental strain related to work
- Z56.81 – Sexual harassment on the job
- Z56.82 – Military deployment status
- Z56.89 – Other problems related to employment
- Z56.9 – Unspecified problems related to employment

Occupational exposure to risk factors

- Z57.0 – Occupational exposure to noise
- Z57.1 – Occupational exposure to radiation
- Z59.48 – Other specified lack of adequate food

- Z57.2 – Occupational exposure to dust
- Z57.31 – Occupational exposure to environmental tobacco smoke
- Z57.39 – Occupational exposure to other air contaminants
- Z57.4 – Occupational exposure to toxic agents in agriculture
- Z57.5 – Occupational exposure to toxic agents in other industries
- Z57.6 – Occupational exposure to extreme temperature
- Z57.7 – Occupational exposure to vibration
- Z57.8 – Occupational exposure to other risk factors
- Z57.9 – Occupational exposure to unspecified risk factor

Problems related to physical environment

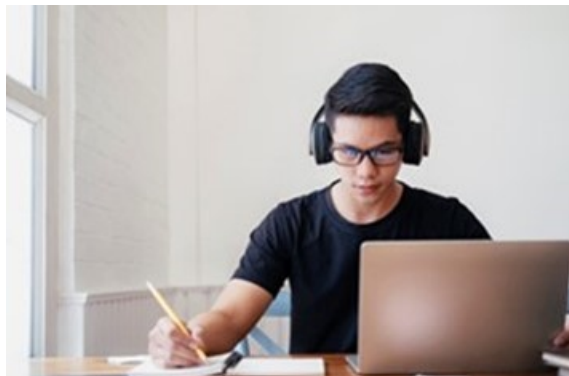
- Z58.6- Inadequate drinking water supply

Problems related to housing and economic circumstances

- Z59.00 – Homelessness Unspecified
- Z59.01 – Sheltered Homelessness
- Z59.02 – Unsheltered Homelessness
- Z59.1 – Inadequate housing
- Z59.2 – Discord with neighbors, lodgers and landlord
- Z59.3 – Problems related to living in residential institution
- Z59.41 – Food Insecurity

Continued next page

Earn CEUs through Coding Webinars



We offer on-demand webinars that provide detail about how to support diagnoses per Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services guidelines. These courses are updated with current codes and guidelines and are eligible for 1.5 continuing education unit credits each.

Topics include:

- Atrial fibrillation
- Cancer
- Chronic kidney disease
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Diabetes
- Major depression
- Mental health
- Rheumatoid arthritis



Register today at availity.com¹.

References

- *World Health Organization, About social determinants of health, found online at: https://www.who.int/social_determinants/sdh_definition/en.*
- *ICD-10 CM coding book*
- *ICD-10 Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting FY 2021*
- *AHA Coding Clinic*

¹ Availity LLC is a multi-payer joint venture company.