

# Social Drivers of Health (SDOH)

## Z Code Documentation Guide

Last updated October 2023

### Overview

Superior Health Quality Alliance is committed to improving health and health care for all individuals and communities by leveraging data to identify disparities and Social Drivers of Health (SDOH), also known as Social Determinants of Health.

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) defines SDOH 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.”

Commercial and government payers are interested in collecting SDOH information in the simplest way possible—with claims data—not only for future reimbursements but also to address specific patient needs and design interventions. Adoption of Z codes across the health care system has been slow and unstandardized. In 2016, Z codes to capture SDOH were added to the ICD-10-CM code set for clinicians to document in patients’ medical records.

Currently, SDOH accounts for approximately 30% to 50% of individual health outcomes. Consistent Z code documentation strengthens uniform data collection across all practice settings so that health systems and community networks can address social and economic issues impacting their communities – helping to improve patients' lives and, in turn, their health.

This guide was created to support organizations in collecting SDOH Z codes and covers codes specific to **Persons with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances (codes Z55-Z65)**.

### Coding and Documentation

In accordance with the [Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting](#), medical coders can report SDOH ICD-10-CM Z codes if they are:

- Collected by qualified front staff, medical assistants, social workers, case managers, nurses or clinicians, and the SDOH information is included in the official medical record.
- Self-reported or documented by the patient, and the SDOH information is signed off by either a clinician or the patient’s provider and incorporated into the medical record.

### Considerations

SDOH Z codes should not be used as the primary diagnosis.

- Use them to indicate a problem that is not an illness or injury but may influence patient care.

## Vendor Software Platforms

Some vendors are building resources directly into Electronic Health Records (EHR) to be shared across settings or information exchanges such as Community Health Information Exchanges (CHIE) and Health Information Exchanges (HIE). A couple of examples are [NowPow](#) and [Unite Us](#).

## Coding Tips

The following ICD-10-CM Z codes can be used in claims to indicate **problems related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances** (codes Z55-Z65).

- Codes in **black** are eligible for billing (can be used for reimbursement). Be aware that claim reimbursements may not be in place for all payers and codes.
- Codes in **red** are not eligible for billing (not used for reimbursement at this time). Use another code in the series that has a greater level of detail, if applicable.

### Problems related to education and literacy (Z55)

ICD-10 Code	Description
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
Z55.6	Problems related to health literacy
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)

ICD-10 Code	Description
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 workplace
Z56.5	Uncongenial work environment
Z56.6	Other physical and mental strain related to work
Z56.8	Other problems related to employment

### Problems related to employment and unemployment (Z56) continued

Z56.81	Sexual harassment on the job
Z56.82	Military deployment status
Z56.89	Other problems related to employment
Z56.9	Unspecified problem related to employment

### Occupational exposure to risk factors (Z57)

ICD-10 Code	Description
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
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

### Problems related to physical environment (Z58)

ICD-10 Code	Description
Z58.6	Inadequate drinking-water supply
Z58.8	Other problems related to physical environment
Z58.81	Basic services unavailable in physical environment
Z58.89	Other problems related to physical environment

## Problems related to housing and economic circumstances (Z59)

ICD-10 Code	Description
Z59.0	Homelessness
Z59.00	Homelessness unspecified
Z59.01	Sheltered homelessness
Z59.02	Unsheltered homelessness
Z59.1	Inadequate housing
Z59.10	Inadequate housing, unspecified
Z59.11	Inadequate housing environmental temperature
Z59.12	Inadequate housing utilities
Z59.19	Other inadequate housing
Z59.2	Discord with neighbors, lodgers and landlord
Z59.3	Problems related to living in residential institution
Z59.4	Lack of adequate food
Z59.41	Food insecurity
Z59.48	Other specified lack of adequate food
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
Z59.82	Transportation insecurity
Z59.86	Financial insecurity
Z59.87*	Material hardship due to limited financial resources, not elsewhere classified
Z59.89	Other problems related to housing and economic circumstances
Z59.9	Problem related to housing and economic circumstances, unspecified

### Problems related to social environment (Z60)

ICD-10 Code	Description
Z60.0	Problems of adjustment to life-cycle transitions
Z60.2	Problems related to living alone
Z60.3	Acculturation difficulty
Z60.4	Social exclusion and rejection
Z60.5	Target of (perceived) adverse discrimination and persecution
Z60.8	Other problems related to social environment
Z60.9	Problem related to social environment, unspecified

### Problems related to upbringing (Z62)

ICD-10 Code	Description
Z62.0	Inadequate parental supervision and control
Z62.1	Parental overprotection
Z62.2	Upbringing away from parents
Z62.21	Child in welfare custody
Z62.22	Institutional upbringing
Z62.23*	Child in custody of non-parental relative
Z62.24*	Child in custody of non-relative guardian
Z62.29	Other upbringing away from parents
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
Z62.810	Personal history of physical and sexual abuse in childhood
Z62.811	Personal history of psychological abuse in childhood
Z62.812	Personal history of neglect in childhood
Z62.813	Personal history of forced labor or sexual exploitation in childhood
Z62.814	Personal history of child financial abuse
Z62.815	Personal history of intimate partner abuse in childhood
Z62.819	Personal history of unspecified abuse in childhood

### Problems related to upbringing (Z62) continued

Z62.82	Parent-child conflict
Z62.820	Parent-biological child conflict
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
Z62.832*	Non-relative guardian-child conflict
Z62.833*	Group home staff-child conflict
Z62.89	Other specified problems related to upbringing
Z62.890	Parent-child estrangement NEC
Z62.891	Sibling rivalry
Z62.892*	Runaway [from current living environment]
Z62.898	Other specified problems related to upbringing
Z62.9	Problem related to upbringing, unspecified

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

ICD-10 Code	Description
Z63.0	Problems in relationship with spouse or partner
Z63.1	Problems in relationship with in-laws
Z63.3	Absence of family member
Z63.31	Absence of family member due to military deployment
Z63.32	Other absence of family member
Z63.4	Disappearance and death of family member
Z63.5	Disruption of family by separation and divorce
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
Z63.72	Alcoholism and drug addiction in family
Z63.79	Other stressful life events affecting family and household
Z63.8	Other specified problems related to primary support group
Z63.9	Problem related to primary support group, unspecified

### Problems related to certain psychosocial circumstances (Z64)

ICD-10 Code	Description
Z64.0	Problems related to unwanted pregnancy
Z64.1	Problems related to multiparity
Z64.4	Discord with counselors

### Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances (Z65)

ICD-10 Code	Description
Z65.0	Conviction in civil and criminal proceedings without imprisonment
Z65.1	Imprisonment and other incarceration
Z65.2	Problems related to release from prison
Z65.3	Problems related to other legal circumstances
Z65.4	Victim of crime and terrorism
Z65.5	Exposure to disaster, war and other hostilities
Z65.8	Other specified problems related to psychosocial circumstances
Z65.9	Problem related to unspecified psychosocial circumstances

\* **Recently added Z codes have an asterisk:** For accurate SDOH coding, check that these new codes have been added to your EHR system and you may now collect and document this information.

### SDOH Supports

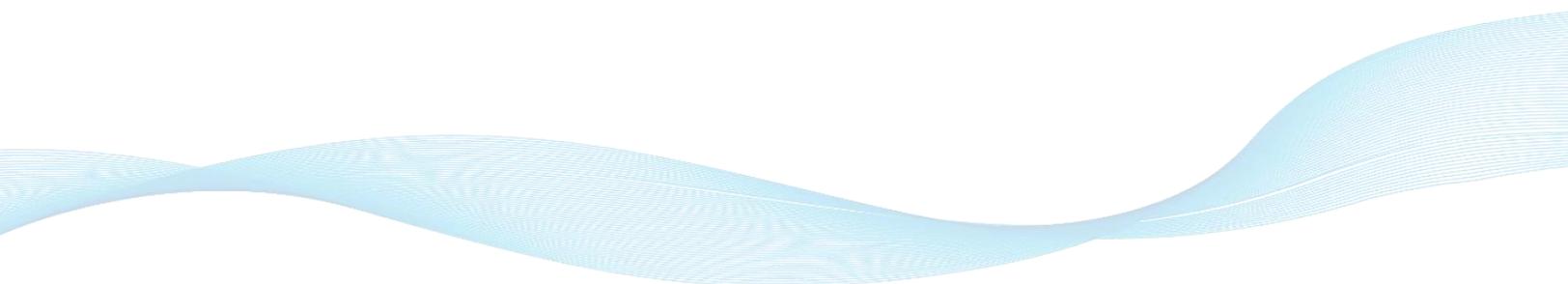
When appropriate, refer patients to local and/or regional community health and support resources (e.g., social services, community health, mental health, primary/specialty care, transportation and other resources).

These resources can be accessed online:

- **Findhelp.org:** An online zip-code search connects patients to local and regional resources.
- **Dial 2-1-1:** to access a list of local Essential Community Services.

### Helpful Resources

- CMS's Z Codes Infographic - 2023 ([cms.gov](https://www.cms.gov)) can be used as a guide for coding.
- [Improving the Collection of SDOH Data with ICD-10-CM Z Codes \(cms.gov\)](https://www.cms.gov)
- [New Z Codes Capture More Social Determinants of Health - AAPC Knowledge Center](https://www.aapc.com)
- [PhenX SDOH Assessment Collection](https://www.nih.gov). National Institutes of Health (NIH): provides standard data collection protocols for investigators to select measures to help with comparing, sharing, and combining data from different studies.
- [PRAPARE](https://www.prapare.org): Downloadable SDOH screening questionnaire.

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- [Social Determinants of Health Information Exchange Toolkit: Foundational Elements for Communities](#). Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). February 2023.
  - [Drivers of Health – Data Collection and Sharing Information](#) An HMO and Partner Clinic Toolkit. Wisconsin Division of Public Health toolkit with implementation strategies and considerations.
  - [The AHC Health-Related Social Needs Screening Tool \(cms.gov\)](#)
  - [SDOH Information Exchange Learning Forum | HealthIT.gov](#)

## References:

1. [Unite Us](#): Date accessed September 9, 2023
2. [World Health Organization](#) SDOH health outcomes. Date accessed May 4, 2023.
3. [NOWPOW.com](#): Date accessed May 3, 2023.
4. [PRAPARE](#): (2022). National Association of Community Health Centers, Inc (NACHC) & Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO).
5. [Coding SDOH Takes Practice - AAPC Knowledge Center](#) Date accessed: March 23, 2023.
6. [ICD-10 Z Codes for Social Determinants of Health](#) (BCBSIL) Date accessed: March 23, 2023.
7. [ICD-10 Coding for Social Determinants of Health \(American Hospital Association, 2022\)](#).
8. [New Z Codes Capture More Social Determinants of Health - AAPC Knowledge Center](#) Date accessed: March 31, 2023.
9. [Tools to Assess and Measure Social Determinants of Health - RHHub Toolkit \(ruralhealthinfo.org\)](#) Date accessed: April 9, 2023.
10. [Z Codes: What They Are & How to Find Them](#) (Career Step, August, 2020). Date accessed: March 23, 2023.