



# Social determinants of health (SDOH)

Addressing patients' social health needs



International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision, Clinical Modification (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> Social determinants of health (SDOH), such as food insecurity, loneliness and social isolation, housing quality and instability, transportation, financial strain, employment and working conditions, affect a wide range of health and quality-of-life outcomes and risks.

## Identify and screen for SDOH and health-related social needs

Addressing social health needs alongside clinical needs improves the whole-person health of your patients. By identifying and addressing SDOH, you and your staff are taking a comprehensive approach to patient care.

Screening is the quick and easy way to identify SDOH. During annual wellness exams and regular appointments with patients, incorporate the screenings built into the electronic health record (EHR). Screenings can be conducted during pre-visit/waiting room paperwork, when a life event has occurred or simply when you feel it's appropriate. **Visit the "Resources" section at [populationhealth.humana.com](http://populationhealth.humana.com) to find Humana's ready-to-use assessment tools that can help you get started.**

## Document and code for SDOH in the EHR

Document patient screening results in the EHR, so that you and your care team can track patient progress over time and communicate screening results to the patient's health insurer. Additionally, ICD-10-CM codes in categories Z55-Z65 (examples on next page) provide clear documentation interoperable across payer systems. The **Gravity Project** offers an online resource with coding guideline assistance for specific SDOH domains.<sup>3</sup>

Guidance on using SDOH ICD-10-CM codes for persons with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances includes:<sup>4</sup>

- Codes for SDOH should be only reported as secondary diagnoses.
- Code assignment may be based on medical record documentation from non-physician 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.



## NEW! ICD-10-CM official guidelines for coding and reporting for fiscal year (FY) 2022

**Social determinants of health codes are located primarily in the Z code categories Z55-Z65. This list of codes below is incomplete, showing examples for your use. Please consult your ICD-10 book for full codes.**

### **Lack of adequate food**

- Z59.41 – Food insecurity

### **Loneliness/lack of primary support group**

- Z60.2 – problems related to living alone
- Z60.4 – social exclusion/rejection (exclusion and rejection on the basis of personal characteristics, such as unusual physical appearance, illness or behavior)
- Z63.8 – other specified problems related to primary support group
- Z63.9 – problems related to primary support group, unspecified

### **Housing**

- Z59.0 – homelessness
- Z59.1 – inadequate housing (lack of heating, restriction of space, technical defects in home preventing adequate care, unsatisfactory surrounding)
- Z59.8 – other problems related to housing and economic circumstances
- Z59.9 – problems related to housing and economic circumstances, unspecified

Assessment and documentation of social risk factors also effect the complexity of medical decision-making (MDM). As of Jan. 1, 2021, Current Procedural Terminology (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>4</sup>

## **Intervene on a positive screening**

If your patient agrees to accept help, connect them to resources and support that may be available through their medical insurance, government programs and nonprofit organizations.

The following resources are also available:

- Eldercare and Area Agencies on Aging – Help is available at 800-677-1116 (TTY: 711), Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time, and at [eldercare.acl.gov](https://eldercare.acl.gov).
- 211 Helpline – Dial 211 from any phone (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week), or visit [211.org](https://211.org).
- [Humana.findhelp.com](https://humana.findhelp.com) – Humana uses the findhelp directory to help locate available food assistance, loneliness resources and other free or reduced cost programs.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> NEJM Catalyst, SDOH, December 2017, <https://catalyst.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/CAT.17.0312>

<sup>3</sup> The Gravity Project, May 2021, <https://confluence.hl7.org/display/GRAV/Terminology+Workstream+Dashboard>

<sup>4</sup> 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)