Social Determinants of Health Using The Z Codes

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Barriers to Coding

- Lack of staff training
- Inability to find SDOH information in patient record
- SDOH not collected by frontline staff
- Limited space on claims form
- Not sure of ICD-10 equivalent for social screening item

From AHIMA

- Currently, a tremendous amount of healthcare data is captured electronically. The data is used by local, state, and federal agencies for population health reporting, trending, research, and more.

- The clinical documentation from sources other than the provider will assist in the accurate capture of data on social determinants of health. The data provided from the code categories Z55-Z65 may be very important information to collect.

- Any of these social determinants can impact an individual's health; for example, not taking prescribed medications as ordered, lack of follow-up care, or exacerbations of chronic illness.

Official Coding Guidelines

- For social determinants of health, such as information found in categories Z55-Z65, Persons with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances, 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. **Patient self-reported documentation may also 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 health record by either a clinician or provider.**

Z55-59

- **Persons with potential health hazards related to socioeconomic and psychosocial circumstances (Z55-Z65)**

- **Z55 Problems related to education and literacy**

- **Z56 Problems related to employment and unemployment**

- **Z57 Occupational exposure to risk factors**

- **Z59 Problems related to housing and economic circumstances**

Z60-65

- 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

Tips for Coding SDOH

- In alphabetic index, search for the problem itself

  - Homeless
  - Hardship
  - Inadequate
  - Insecurity
  - Lack of
  - Unemployed
  - Upbringing

Examples

- Category Z56 Problems related employment and unemployment, subcategory Z56.3, Stressful work schedule: A stressful work schedule can certainly impact the health of an individual.

- Category Z59 Problems related to housing and economic circumstances, subcategory Z59.1, Inadequate housing: This may impact an individual's ability to prepare and eat healthy meals, get proper rest, and practice good personal hygiene.

- Category Z63 Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances, subcategory Z63.6, Dependent relative needing care at home: This situation can be very stressful for the caregiver, and oftentimes the caregiver may neglect their own health due to the responsibilities of caring for a relative.

Code the SDOH

- New patient
- CHF; COPD, severe; HTN
- Extensive history taken, physical exam
- Counseling on diet, smoking cessation
- Reviewed current meds and dosages and discussed need to take all meds as prescribed.
- He had a job loss and this will lead to loss of insurance after the first of the year; he is worried this will have a serious impact on his healthcare.

Example

- A patient admitted to the hospital is underweight and not thriving. After talking with the mom and asking about food intake, you determine the patient has food insecurity.

Coding Tip Sheet

- https://downloads.aap.org/AAP/PDF/SDOH.pdf
- From American Academy of Pediatrics
- "Often, the SDOH that is identified or continues to impact the patient will require interventions from the primary care physician and may result in coordinating with community and/or school resources. These efforts are time-consuming and often are unfunded.
- With the recognition by the Current Procedural Terminology Editorial Panel and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services of increased complexity caused by social issues, there is hope these important services will be funded. Adding SDOH in the MDM risk table for office-based E/M services is a step in the right direction. However, it is important for physicians and clinical staff to document when these issues impact the encounter."

Family/Primary Support Group Issues (Relationship)	Z63.3 [a] Absence of family member Z63.4 Disappearance and death of family member Z63.5 Disruption of family by separation and divorce Z63.71 Stress on family due to return of family member from military deployment Z63.79 Other stressful life events affecting family and household Z63.0 Problems in relationship with spouse or partner Z63.6 Dependent relative needing care at home Z63.8 Other specified problems related to primary support group Z63.9 Problem related to primary support group, unspecified
Food Insecurity	Z59.4 [a] Lack of adequate food and
Housing issues	Z59.0 Lack of housing (homeless) Z59.1 [a] Inadequate housing Z59.8 [a] Other problems related to housing and economic circumstances Z59.3 Problems related to living in residential institution
Nutrition	Z71.3 Dietary counseling and surveillance Z59.4 [a] Lack of adequate food and safe drinking water
Parent/Sibling-Child Issues	Z62.0 Inadequate parental supervision and control Z62.1 Parental overprotection Z62.3 Hostility towards and scapegoating of child Z62.6 Inappropriate (excessive) parental pressure Z62.820 Parent-biological child conflict Z62.821 Parent-adopted child conflict Z62.822 Parent-foster child conflict Z62.890 Parent-child estrangement NEC Z62.891 Sibling rivalry
Psychosocial Issues	Z64.0 Problems related to unwanted pregnancy Z64.4 Discord with counselors 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
Sleep Issues	Z72.820 Sleep deprivation

AHIMA Steps to SDOH Coding

- "Examples of internal guidelines include:
- In accordance with the AHA 4th Quarter 2019 issue of *Coding Clinic*, identifying the categories of clinicians, such as, community health workers, social workers and case managers whose health record documentation may be used for SDOH code assignment.
- Identifying documentation that would justify the assignment of an SDOH-related ICD-10-CM code. For example, documentation of "Tent City" resident or "Lives in vehicle" would justify the reporting of code Z59.0, Homelessness. Code Z56.6, Other physical and mental strain related to work, is to be assigned for documentation of patient being furloughed, underemployed, or reporting reduced work hours.
- Reporting SDOH-related codes on readmission records to support the healthcare organization's readmission reduction program.
- Requiring the reporting of SDOH-related codes on all well child visits to meet a state Medicaid requirement that this information be included on the claim.
- Requiring that SDOH-related ICD-10-CM codes be reported in the top 25 diagnosis fields to ensure that the information is included on claims submitted to payers."

More Resources

- https://www.cms.gov/files/document/z-codes-data-highlight.pdf

- Using Z Codes: The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Data Journey to Better Outcomes (cms.gov)

- https://nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/ask-code-documenting-homelessness-throughout-the-healthcare-system.pdf

- https://www.aha.org/system/files/2018-04/value-initiative-icd-10-code-social-determinants-of-health.pdf

- Gravity Project (thegravityproject.net)