

COFFEE & CODING

Monday, January 22, 2024

Why and how to use the new SDOH codes

Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) have become increasingly important in determining the needs of patients and directing them to the help they need. For 2024, we have both a new diagnosis code as well as a new CPT code for SDOH that you'll need to know and apply. Let's take a closer look.

First, a quick refresher:

As defined by the CDC, social determinants of health “are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.”¹



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Social Determinants of Health at CDC,” <https://www.cdc.gov/about/sdoh/index.html>

Examples of SDOH include:

- Safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods
- Racism, discrimination, and violence
- Education, job opportunities, and income
- Access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities
- Polluted air and water
- Language and literacy skills

Now let's look at the new CPT code: G0136

CMS established a stand-alone code, G0136 (an HCPCS code), for the assessment of SDOH. They categorize SDOH into broad groups: “economic stability, education access and quality, neighborhood and built environment, and social and community context, which include factors like how soon, food and nutrition access, and transportation needs.”

Billing for this code revolves around an AHC HRSN Screening Tool with questions designed to be used for individual respondents who can answer the questions themselves. (A parent or caregiver can answer for an individual, too, if that makes more sense.) Clinicians, including nurse practitioners and their staffs, can easily use this short tool as part of their busy clinical workflows with people of all ages, backgrounds, and settings.

This questionnaire includes 26 standardized questions that relate to the social risk factors that may affect the patient's diagnosis and treatment. It should require only 5-15 minutes to complete, and patients can fill out the form on the day of an E/M service. Subsequently, they will need to fill out a new questionnaire after six months. You can find the questionnaire at the CMS.gov site below.

CMS will allow this code with certain psychiatric diagnostic evaluations, provided a clinical psychologist has performed a behavior assessment.

The SDoH diagnosis list is below, with the new additions flagged.²

Z55 – Problems related to education and literacy

- Z55.5 – Less than a high school diploma (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
- NEW** • Z55.6 – Problems related to health literacy

Z56 – Problems related to employment and unemployment

Z57 – Occupational exposure to risk factors

Z58 – Problems related to physical environment (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

- Z58.6 – Inadequate drinking-water supply (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
- Z58.8 – Other problems related to physical environment
- NEW** • Z58.81 – Basic services unavailable in physical environment
- NEW** • Z58.89 – Other problems related to physical environment

Z59 – Problems related to housing and economic circumstances

- Z59.0 – Homelessness (Updated)
 - Z59.00 – Homelessness unspecified (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
 - Z59.01 – Sheltered homelessness (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
 - Z59.02 – Unsheltered homelessness (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
- Z59.1 – Inadequate Housing (Updated)
 - NEW** • Z59.10 – Inadequate housing, unspecified
 - NEW** • Z59.11 – Inadequate housing environmental temperature
 - NEW** • Z59.12 – Inadequate housing utilities
 - NEW** • Z59.19 – Other inadequate housing
- Z59.4 – Lack of adequate food (Updated)
 - Z59.41 – Food insecurity (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
 - Z59.48 – Other specified lack of adequate food (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
- Z59.8 – Other problems related to housing and economic circumstances (Updated)
 - Z59.81 – Housing instability, housed (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
 - Z59.811 – Housing instability, housed, with risk of homelessness (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

- Z59.812 – Housing instability, housed, homelessness in past 12 months (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)
- Z59.819 – Housing instability, housed unspecified (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

- Z59.82 – Transportation insecurity (Added, Oct. 1, 2022)

- Z59.86 – Financial insecurity (Added, Oct. 1, 2022)

- Z59.87 – Material hardship due to limited financial resources, not elsewhere classified (Added, Oct. 1, 2022; Revised, April 1, 2023)

- Z59.89 – Other problems related to housing and economic circumstances (Added, Oct. 1, 2021)

Z60 – Problems related to social environment

Z62 – Problems related to upbringing

- Z62.2 – Upbringing away from parents
- NEW** • Z62.23 – Child in custody of non-parental relative (Added, Oct. 1, 2023)
- NEW** • Z62.24 – Child in custody of non-relative guardian (Added, Oct. 1, 2023)
- Z62.8 – Other specified problems related to upbringing (Updated)
 - Z62.81 – Personal history of abuse in childhood
 - NEW** • Z62.814 – Personal history of child financial abuse
 - NEW** • Z62.815 – Personal history of intimate partner abuse in childhood
 - Z62.82 – Parent-child conflict
 - NEW** • Z62.823 – Parent-step child conflict (Added, Oct. 1, 2023)
 - Z62.83 – Non-parental relative or guardian-child conflict (Added Oct. 1, 2023)
 - NEW** • Z62.831 – Non-parental relative-child conflict (Added Oct. 1, 2023)
 - NEW** • Z62.832 – Non-relative guardian-child conflict (Added Oct. 1, 2023)
 - NEW** • Z62.833 – Group home staff-child conflict (Added Oct. 1, 2023)
 - Z62.89 – Other specified problems related to upbringing
 - NEW** • Z62.892 – Runaway [from current living environment] (Added Oct. 1, 2023)

Z63 – Other problems related to primary support group, including family circumstances

Z64 – Problems related to certain psychosocial circumstance

Z65 – Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances

² [IMPROVING THE COLLECTION OF Social Determinants of Health \(SDOH\) Data with ICD-10-CM Z Codes \(cms.gov\)](#)

More Resources:

[HCPCS Code G0136 for Assessment Social Determinants of Health \(SDoH\) - CodingIntel](#)

[The AHC Health-Related Social Needs Screening Tool \(cms.gov\)](#)

[A Guide to Using the Accountable Health Communities Health-Related Social Needs Screening Tool: Promising Practices and Key Insights \(cms.gov\)](#)

**Got a question about E/M coding? We'd love to hear from you.
Submit your questions by emailing us at coders@calmwatersai.com!**



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