

# Struggling with Z codes?

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CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) has recently released a graphic that could help shed some light.

<https://www.cms.gov/files/document/cms-2023-omh-z-code-resource.pdf>

**IMPROVING THE COLLECTION OF Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) Data with ICD-10-CM Z Codes**

### What Are Z Codes?

- SDOH-related Z codes range from ICD-10-CM categories Z55-Z65 and are used to document SDOH data (e.g., housing, food insecurity, lack of transportation)
- Z codes refer to factors influencing health status or reasons for contact with health services that are not classifiable elsewhere as diseases, injuries, or external causes

### What Are SDOH & Why Collect Them?

- SDOH are the conditions in the environment 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<sup>1</sup>
- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that SDOH accounts for **30-55% of health outcomes**<sup>2</sup>

### Using Z Codes for SDOH

- SDOH information can be collected before, during, or after a health care encounter through structured health risk assessments and screening tools
- These codes should be assigned only when the documentation specifies that the patient has an associated problem or risk factor that influences the patient's health
- Coding professionals may utilize documentation of social information from social workers, community health workers, case managers, or nurses, if their documentation is included in the official medical record

- SDOH information can be collected through person-provider interaction or self-reported, as long as it is signed-off on and incorporated into the medical record by a clinician or provider
- It is important to screen for SDOH information at each health care encounter to understand circumstances that may have changed in the patient's status

[VIEW JOURNEY MAP](#)

<sup>1</sup> Healthy People 2030   <sup>2</sup> World Health Organization

[go.cms.gov/OMH](https://go.cms.gov/OMH)

For Questions Contact: [The CMS Health Equity Technical Assistance Program](#) | [ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting FY 2024](#)



Collecting SDOH can improve equity in health care delivery and research by:

- Empowering providers to identify and address health disparities (e.g., care coordination and referrals)
- Supporting quality measurement
- Supporting planning and implementation of social needs interventions
- Identifying community and population needs
- Monitoring SDOH intervention effectiveness for patient outcomes
- Utilizing data to advocate for updating and creating new policies



## ICD-10-CM Z Codes Update

- New SDOH Z codes may become effective each April 1 and October 1. New codes are announced prior to their effective date on [CDC website](#)
- Use the CDC National Center for Health Statistics [ICD-10-CM Browser tool](#) to search for all the current Z codes.
- Join the public process for SDOH code development and approval through the [ICD-10-CM Coordination and Maintenance Committee](#)

## Exhibit 1. Recent SDOH Z Code Categories and New Codes

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### 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)

- NEW** • 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**