



Mid-America (HHS Region 7)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Context Clues: Using Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) to Enhance Treatment: Orientation to Z-Codes

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GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
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HEALING-CENTERED/  
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INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
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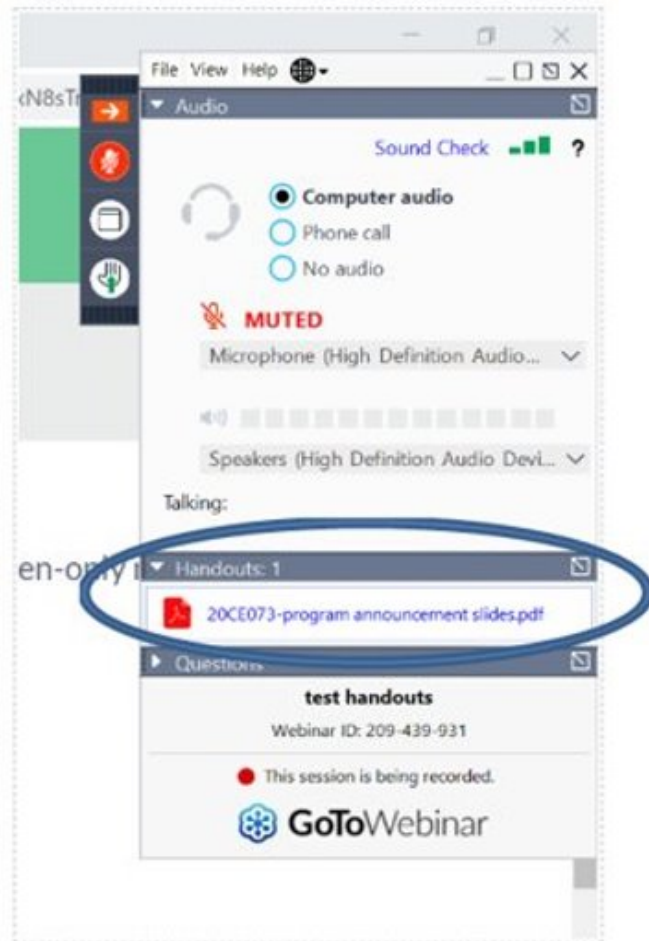
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# Announcements

- All attendees are automatically muted
- Submit questions any time during the webinar
- Attendees will receive a certificate of completion for each webinar if they attend each in their entirety
- This webinar is being recorded.

<https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mid-america-mhttc/context-clues-using-social-determinants-health-sdoh-enhance-treatment>

# Downloading handouts





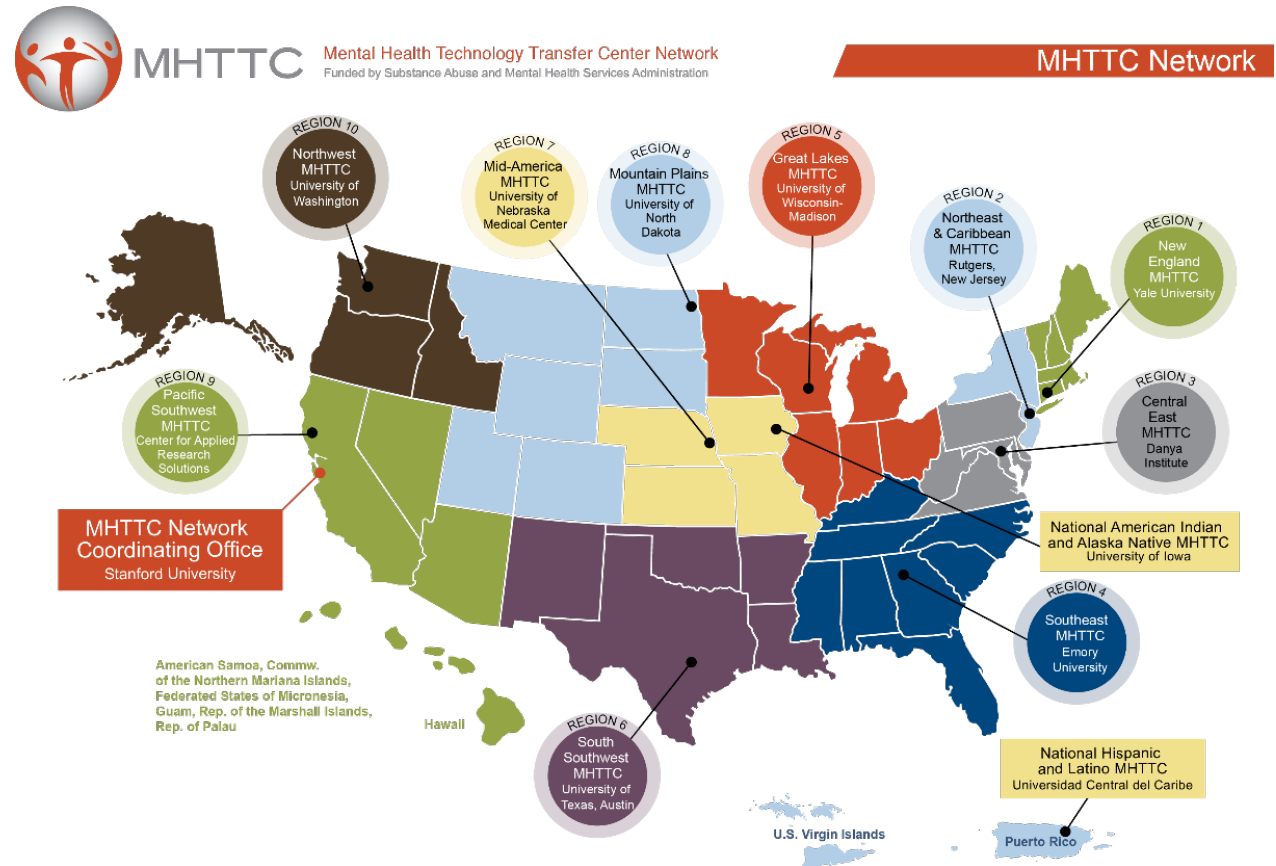
# Evaluation


- At the end of this session, you will be asked to complete a brief evaluation.
- Because this event is federally funded, we are required to ask about participants' satisfaction with our services.
- To maintain our funding, we are required to get 80% participation.
- We greatly value your feedback and participation in the survey!!

# Mid-America Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

Established to increase utilization of evidence-based mental health practices.

- Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.
- Free training and technical assistance.
- SAMHSA grant awarded to the Behavioral Health Education Center of Nebraska at University of Nebraska Medical Center.  
(5 years, \$3.7 million, grant number: H79SM081769)





# Learning Objectives

This presentation provides an orientation to Z-Codes and how they are utilized in primary care settings to improve care. You will:

- Learn what Z-Codes are
- Learn how Z-Codes are predictive of health status, and
- Learn to utilize Z-Codes to track, report and make referrals to address Social Determinants of Health





# What are Z-Codes?

# Definition of Z-Codes

**Social Determinants Of Health** are the conditions by which we are, born, live, work, and grow up; and the forces that shape these conditions (WHO, 2018).

**Social Determinants Of Health** might account for 60-80% of patient health outcomes (CDC, 2019; Hood, 2016).

**Z-Codes** are standardized measures of **Social Determinants of Health** that are introduced in the 10<sup>th</sup> revision of ICD-10.

# List of Z-Code Categories

- |     |  |     |  |
|-----|--|-----|--|
| Z55 | Problems related to education and literacy                                       | Z65 | Problems related to other psychosocial circumstances             |
| Z56 | Problems related to employment and unemployment                                  | Z68 | Body Mass Index (BMI)  |
| Z57 | Occupational exposure to risk factors  | Z72 | Problems related to lifestyle                                    |
| Z59 | Problems related to housing and economic circumstances                           | Z73 | Problems related to life management difficulty                   |
| Z60 | Problems related to social environment   | Z74 | Problems related to care provider dependency                     |
| Z62 | Problems related to upbringing   | Z75 | Problems related to medical facilities and other health care     |
| Z63 | Other problems related to primary supports group, including family circumstances | Z77 | Other contact with and (suspected) exposures hazardous to health |
|     |  | Z91 | Personal risk factors, not elsewhere classified                  |

# Z-Sub-Codes: Z55 Example

## Z55: Problems Related to Education and Literacy

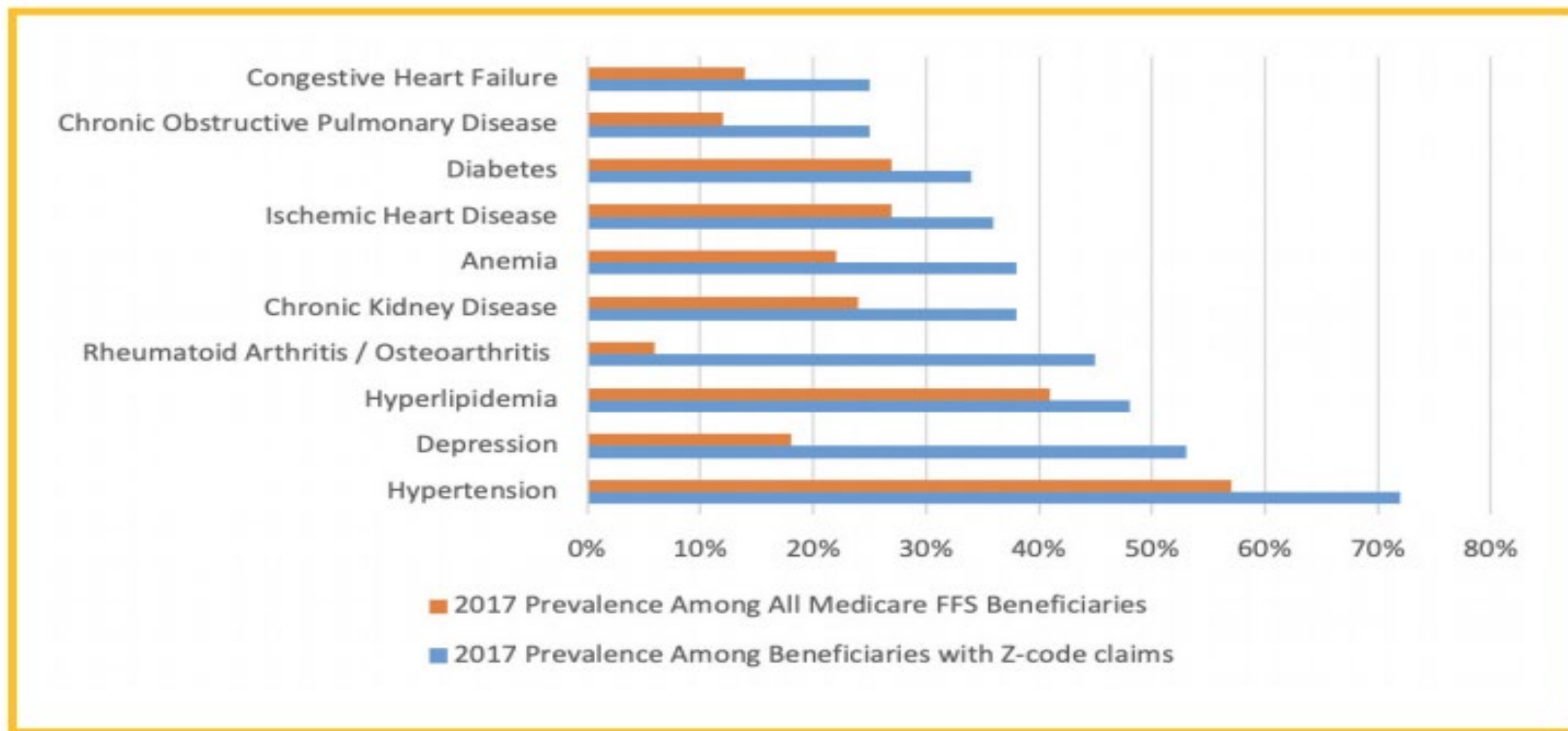
Z55.0	Illiteracy and low-level literacy	Z55.4	Educational maladjustment and discord with teachers and classmates
Z55.1	Schooling unavailable and unattainable	Z558	Other problems related to education and literacy
Z55.3	Failed school examinations	Z559	Problems related to education and literacy, unspecified
Z55.3	Underachievement in school		

# Most prevalent Medicare Z-Codes in 2017 (number of claims)

1. Z590 Homelessness (223,062)
2. Z602 Problems related to living alone (196,551)
3. Z634 Disappearance and death of family member (127,766)
4. Z658 Other specified problems related to psychosocial circumstances (58,083)
5. Z630 Problems in relationship with spouse or partner (49,448)

(Hodge & Khau, 2020)

# Z-Codes and Chronic Conditions



(Hodge & Khau, 2020)



How do we use  
Z-Codes  
?



# Using Z-Codes CMS 2021

## USING Z CODES: The **Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)** Data Journey to Better Outcomes

What are  
**Z**  
codes

SDOH-related Z codes ranging from Z55-Z65 are the ICD-10-CM encounter reason codes used to document SDOH data (e.g., housing, food insecurity, transportation, etc.).

SDOH are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, and age.

### Step 1 Collect SDOH Data

**Any member of a person's care team can collect SDOH data during any encounter.**

- Includes providers, social workers, community health workers, case managers, patient navigators, and nurses.
- Can be collected at intake through health risk assessments, screening tools, person-provider interaction, and individual self-reporting.

### Step 2 Document SDOH Data

**Data are recorded in a person's paper or electronic health record (EHR).**

- SDOH data may be documented in the problem or diagnosis list, patient or client history, or provider notes.
- Care teams may collect more detailed SDOH data than current Z codes allow. These data should be retained.
- Efforts are ongoing to close Z code gaps and standardize SDOH data.

### Step 3 Map SDOH Data to Z Codes

**Assistance is available from the ICD-10-CM Official Guidelines for Coding and Reporting.<sup>1</sup>**

- Coding, billing, and EHR systems help coders assign standardized codes (e.g., Z codes).
- Coders can assign SDOH Z codes based on self-reported data and/or information documented in an individual's health care record by any member of the care team.<sup>2</sup>

### Step 4 Use SDOH Z Code Data

**Data analysis can help improve quality, care coordination, and experience of care.**

- Identify individuals' social risk factors and unmet needs.
- Inform health care and services, follow-up, and discharge planning.
- Trigger referrals to social services that meet individuals' needs.
- Track referrals between providers and social service organizations.

### Step 5 Report SDOH Z Code Data Findings

**SDOH data can be added to key reports** for executive leadership and Boards of Directors to inform value-based care opportunities.

- Findings can be shared with social service organizations, providers, health plans, and consumer/patient advisory boards to identify unmet needs.
- A **Disparities Impact Statement** can be used to identify opportunities for advancing health equity.



# Why should we use Z- Codes?

## Patient Needs

- Z-codes enhance patient care
- Improves care coordination and referrals
- Documenting in medical records can support systems for referral and follow-up for services

## Community Needs

- Informs state and local governments about community needs
- Aggregate data identifies "clusters" of community needs
- Data can support planning and implementation of social needs intervention



## **Integrated Care Model**

Engage community-based teams to promote relationship building

Facilitate community-wide discussions on best practices related to integrated care

Provide a framework for the development of community-driven protocols and best practices



## **Z-Code Claims**

Establish pilot sites to implement community-wide adoption of routine SDoH screening

Offer training to providers on the usage of z-codes and best practices for related interventions

Identify Medicaid members with unmet SDoH needs based on z-code claims

Identify gaps in care based on correlations between SDoH and health outcomes



## **Interventions**

### **Internal**

Identify and refer Medicaid members who could benefit from case management or other services

### **External**

Provide support to community partners to make referrals through Aunt Bertha

### **Systemic**

Partner with communities to develop data-driven, coordinated responses to local and regional barriers

# Z-Codes and Population Health

## ASK

- About SDOH and track needs with Z-Codes in Electronic Health Records.

## IDENTIFY

- Find local resources for common Z-Code claims. Reach out and establish referral procedures.

## ACT

- Identify patients via Z-Codes and increase their motivation to seek help. Make referrals.

# Practice Application

“Our Case Study”



# What can we learn from our case study?

Claudia



Mother  
Age: 38  
Race: Latina  
Employment: Waitress  
Insurance: through employer

Patrick



Father  
Age: 41  
Race: White/Thai  
Employment: Auto detailer  
Insurance: marketplace plan

Ivonne



Grandmother  
Age: 63  
Race: Latina  
Employment: N/A  
Insurance: none

# What can we learn from our case study?

Tyler



Eldest daughter  
Age: 16  
Race: biracial  
Employment: student  
Insurance: Medicaid

Elliot



Son  
Age: 13  
Race: Latino  
Employment: student  
Insurance: Medicaid

Editth



Youngest daughter  
Age: 2  
Race: biracial  
Employment: N/A  
Insurance: Medicaid



# Selected References

World Health Organization. (2018). Social determinants of health. [www.who.int/social\\_determinants/en/](http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en/)

Hood, C.M., Gennuso, K.P., Swain, G.R., & Catlin, B.B. (2016). County health rankings: Relationships between determinant factors and health outcomes. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 50(2), 129-135.

Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Social determinants of health, healthy people 2020.

2019. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives/topic/social-determinants-of-health>

# Resources

- Mid-America MHTTC <https://mhttcnetwork.org/centers/mid-america-mhttc/home>
- Aetna Better Health of Kansas [https://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/kansas/\[aetnabetterhealth.com\]](https://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/kansas/[aetnabetterhealth.com])  
[SoCKansas@aetna.com](mailto:SoCKansas@aetna.com)
- Aunt Bertha (within KS) [https://aetna-ks.auntbertha.com/\[aetna-ks.auntbertha.com\]](https://aetna-ks.auntbertha.com/[aetna-ks.auntbertha.com])
- Aunt Bertha (outside KS) [https://www.findhelp.org/\[findhelp.org\]](https://www.findhelp.org/[findhelp.org])



Questions?

