



Social Needs Screening Tools

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Researchers, clinical practitioners, and health policy experts have increasingly recognized that understanding social determinants of health is fundamental to the well-being of individuals.^{1,2}

Recent work has highlighted the importance of understanding the specific social hurdles patients face in the context of primary care, making social needs screenings a valuable way to assess the social determinants of health that impact a patient's well-being.³

Social resources and supports have a foundational influence on health, disease prevention, and illness recovery across the life course. Affordable housing; neighborhood and workplace safety; school quality; water, food, and air quality; and social interactions and relationships have direct and indirect linkages to individual health outcomes and health care costs.¹

Accordingly, health care organizations across the United States are rushing to implement social needs screening tools in primary care settings. The National Academies of Sciences recently published proceedings from a workshop on investing in health-related social needs, noting that there is a lack of evidence supporting effective, efficient models of screening for and addressing social needs in clinical care.⁴ However, healthcare payment and policy shifts towards value-based and risk-based contracts are engendering novel efforts to address social needs. Some organizations have engaged commercial vendors to assist in this work.



The following lists have helpful resources for health care organizations interested in social needs screening.

Screening Tools

- **American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP): The EveryONE Project Social Needs Screening Tool**
https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/everyone_project/hops19-physician-form-sdoh.pdf
- **OCHIN: Social Determinants of Health Electronic Health Record Tools in Community Health Centers**
annfamned.org/content/suppl/2018/09/06/16.5.399.DC1/Gold_Supp_Apps.pdf
- **Health Leads: Screening Toolkit**
healthleadsusa.org/resources/the-health-leads-screening-toolkit/
- **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation: Accountable Health Communities Health-Related Social Needs Screening Tool**
innovation.cms.gov/files/worksheets/ahcm-screeningtool.pdf

Additional Resources

- **AAFP:**
Summary of lessons learned about screening for and addressing social needs.
aafp.org/fpm/2019/0900/p13.html
- **The Social Interventions Research & Evaluation Network (SIREN):** Summaries of articles published in a special issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine on social needs screening.
[ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(19\)30317-4/fulltext](http://ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(19)30317-4/fulltext)
- **National Alliance to Impact the Social Determinants of Health.** Issue brief on identifying social risk and needs in health care.
nasdoh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/NASDOH-Social-Risks-Issue-Brief.pdf
- **Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc.** Issue brief on screening for social determinants of health in populations with complex needs. chcs.org/resource/screening-social-determinants-health-populations-complex-needs-implementation-considerations/

References

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