Addressing Social Drivers of Maternal and Infant Health in Maternity Care Settings
Operational Guidance

Raising the Bar for Maternal Health Equity and Excellence recommends that maternity services integrate screening at intake for social, mental health, and physical health needs and periodic rescreening across this episode; include identified needs in care plans co-created with childbearing women and people; and implement well-designed processes to support meeting these needs.[1]

A broad range of unmet social needs – from experiencing intimate partner violence or homelessness to having a substance use disorder – adversely affect maternal and infant health outcomes.[2] Addressing social needs is an important pathway to achieving better maternity outcomes. And the duration of this episode of care and frequency of visits make it an opportune time to implement this intervention. Although this work in progress is not well established within maternity care, screening in this population has identified high rates of social needs and strong support for attention to social needs in pregnancy.[3]

This operational guidance provides core resources to enable maternity services to identify appropriate screening tools, incorporate them into systems and workflows, and identify and support the use of needed services. Explore the *Raising the Bar toolbox* for companion resources on delivery system and payment reforms that support addressing social needs within maternity care.[4]

Assessing the Return on Investment of Healthcare and Social Service Organization Partnerships

Calculating a return on investment may enable healthcare systems to move forward with helping childbearing families address unmet social needs.

Health Care Access Now: Calculating ROI of a Care Coordination Program to Address Social Determinants of Health (2020)
Case study of use of a return-on-investment calculator to support healthcare–community-based organization partnerships to meet social needs and improve health.

▸ https://www.commonwealthfund.org/sites/default/files/2020-10/McCarthy_HCAN_ROI_ Calculator_Use_Case_v2.pdf

Using a Tool to Measure Return on Investment in Addressing Health-Related Social Needs (2021)
How an available ROI calculator (see next resource) and related tools can help healthcare organizations and community-based organizations create a business case for cross-sector partnerships to address health-related social needs.

▶ https://www.commonwealthfund.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/McCarthy_using_ROI_calculator_health_related_social_needs_ib_FINAL.pdf

Welcome to the Return on Investment (ROI) Calculator for Partnerships to Address the Social Determinants of Health
Comprehensive toolkit to help health systems, providers, community-based organizations and others develop sustainable partnerships to meet health-related social needs.

▶ https://www.commonwealthfund.org/roi-calculator

Screening Tools for Social Needs

No social needs screening tools have been specifically developed for maternity care, and no single tool is widely used in maternity care at this time. The following resources can assist with selection of new or modified tools.

The Accountable Health Communities Health-Related Social Needs Screening Tool (2021)
Ten-item tool, plus 26 supplemental items, with guidance for using beyond AHC model.

▶ https://innovation.cms.gov/files/worksheets/ahcm-screeningtool.pdf

▶ https://innovation.cms.gov/media/document/ahcm-screening-tool-citation

Guide to Implementing Social Risk Screening and Referral-Making (2021)
Five-step roadmap, with tools and resources to use in ambulatory settings.

▶ https://sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/guide-implementing-social-risk-screening-and-referral-making

Health-Related Social Needs Screening Question Bank
Items that can be used to screen for food insecurity, housing instability, transportation challenges, education/literacy, and difficulty paying for medical expenses, drawn from five widely used social needs screeners, with discussion of sensitive processes for screening.

▶ https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/strategic-projects/health-equity/ep-2/hrsn-screening-question-bank.pdf

SCREEN Report: State of the Science on Social Screening in Healthcare Settings (2022)
Covers prevalence of social needs screening, psychometric and pragmatic validity of tools, patient and caregiver views of screening, provider views of screening, and implementation. With slide decks, podcasts, and screening implementation guidelines and toolkits.

▶ https://sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/tools-resources/resources/screen-report-state-science-social-screening-healthcare-settings#Full-Report

Social Needs Screening Tool Comparison Table (2019)

At-a-glance comparison of widely used tools with respect to intended population/settings, number of items, social health domains, languages, etc., with links to item content.

▸ https://sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/tools-resources/resources/screening-tools-comparison

The Health Leads Screening Toolkit (2022)

Guide for selecting, adapting, or creating a social needs screening tool from included screening questions library.

▸ https://healthleadsusa.org/resources/the-health-leads-screening-toolkit/

The Whole PERSON Health Score: A Patient-Focused Tool to Measure Nonmedical Determinants of Health (2022)

Describes a 28-question tool across six domains with needs-based color-coding and tracking features to facilitate clinical integration, and results of a large local implementation pilot.

▸ https://www.cdc.gov/dhdsp/pubs/docs/sib-nov2022-508.pdf

Technical Support for Documenting and Sharing Social Needs and Follow-Up Actions

Medical coding systems and electronic health records increasingly support documentation of both social needs and processes for addressing identified needs. Data sharing with community and social services can help ensure that identified needs are met. The following resources can assist with effective integration.

Compendium of Medical Terminology Codes for Social Risk Factors (2018)

Aligns 20 social need dimensions from six widely used screeners with four different medical coding systems to support providers and other stakeholders in meeting social needs.

▸ https://sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/tools-resources/resources/compendium-medical-terminology-codes-social-risk-factors

Comprehensive Listing ICD-10-CM Files: 2023 Release of ICD-10-CM

Changes to codes and coding guidelines, including expanded options and details for capturing social needs, effective April 1, 2023. Page includes all prior ICD-10-CM releases.

▸ https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/icd/Comprehensive-Listing-of-ICD-10-CM-Files.htm

Implementation Guidance for Screening for Social Determinants of Health in an Electronic Health Record (2021)

Using electronic health records to standardize social needs screening, and integrate social needs into workflows, with guidance for screening tools and practices.

▸ https://oehi.colorado.gov/sites/oehi/files/documents/S-HIE%20Screening%20Implementation%20Guidance.pdf

Social Determinants of Health Information Exchange Toolkit: Foundational Elements for Communities (2023)
Toolkit to support healthcare provider entities and others working to collect, use, and exchange interoperable standardized social drivers of health data to advance health equity.

▸ https://www.healthit.gov/sites/default/files/2023-02/Social%20Determinants%20of%20Health%20Information%20Exchange%20Toolkit%202023_508.pdf

Using Z Codes: The Social Determinants of Health (SDOH); Data Journey to Better Outcomes (2022)
Infographic identifying healthcare administrator, provider, and coding professional roles in using Z codes and processes for tracking and addressing social needs.

▸ https://www.cms.gov/files/document/zcodes-infographic.pdf

Identifying, Connecting Childbearing Families With, and Covering Social Services

The many resources supporting identification, referral, and covering of needed health-related social services include the following social services referral platforms, quality measures, and guidance to states from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for helping meet social needs of individuals with Medicaid coverage.

Best Practices in Equitable Care Delivery: Addressing Systemic Racism and Other Social Determinants of Health as Causes of Obstetrical Disparities (2022)
This far-reaching Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine Consult Series guidance recommends social needs screening at the first prenatal visit and at multiple points thereafter, and connecting those with identified needs with appropriate community services, along with many other practices for mitigating racism and advancing equity.

▸ https://s3.amazonaws.com/cdn.smfm.org/attachments/1031/b10dec6045d874565e2654239a7e502b.pdf

Best Practices: Using Social Determinants of Health Resource and Referral Data to Increase Equitable Access and Connection Rates to Essential Resources (2021)
Best practices for leveraging databases of local social needs resources within health systems.

▸ https://healthleadsusa.org/resources/health-resource-and-referral-data-to-increase-equitable-access-and-connections/

Community Resource Referral Platforms: A Guide for Health Care Organizations (2019)
Reviews nine commonly used platforms and experiences of early adopters in selecting and using them.

▸ https://sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/tools-resources/resources/community-resource-referral-platforms-guide-health-care-organizations

Developing National Social Care Standards (2023)
Quality measures, standards, regulations, and other tools and processes signal that social care is becoming an integrated part of the healthcare system.

▶ https://www.healthaffairs.org/content/forefront/developing-national-social-care-standards

FindHelp.org
National community resource referral platform of free or reduced help with finances, housing, food, transit, healthcare, etc., by zip code. Integrates with selected electronic health systems (formerly: Aunt Bertha).

▶ https://www.findhelp.org/

Innovative Program to Watch: Abundant Birth Project

Providing direct unconditional cash payments has been a successful way to enable childbearing families in historically marginalized communities to flexibly identify and meet priority and often changing needs and experience better birth outcomes.[5] This can be a mechanism for rapid, inclusive, and equitable impact in the context of economic and health challenges.[6] Expecting Justice created the Abundant Birth Project to pilot this trust-based concept among childbearing families in California. An evaluation of its impact on preterm birth and other important outcomes is under way.[7]

Re: Additional Guidance on Use of In Lieu of Services and Settings in Medicaid Managed Care (2023)
Guidance from CMS on expanded service and settings options for meeting social needs and supporting community-based organizations.

▶ https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/smd23001.pdf

Re: Opportunities in Medicaid and CHIP to Address Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) (2021)
Guidance from CMS describing overarching principles, covered Medicaid and CHIP social needs services and supports, and other options for addressing social needs.

▶ https://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/sho21001.pdf

Social Needs Referral Networks (2021)
Identifies state- and one community-specific referral platform for meeting social needs.

▶ https://aligningforhealth.org/social-needs-referral-networks-2/

Social Needs Screening and Intervention (SNS-E)
This health plan-level measure (SNS-E) captures members screened for food, housing, and transportation needs, as well as help provided to those with positive screens. It could be applied to maternity care with a birthing women and people denominator and time frame.

▶ https://www.ncqa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/HEDIS-MY-2023-Measure-Description.pdf

To follow the growing focus on identifying and integrating social needs within healthcare, please visit SIREN, the Social Interventions Research & Evaluation Network, at https://sirenetwork.ucsf.edu/.

Endnotes

[1] National Partnership for Women & Children. *Raising the Bar: The Maternal and Newborn Care Provider Role,* 2023, https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/rtb-care-provider.pdf

[2] Joia Crear-Perry and Sinsi Hernández-Cancio. "Saving the Lives of Moms and Babies: Addressing Racism and Socioeconomic Influencers," National Partnership for Women & Children, June 2021, https://live-national-partnership-for-women-dev.pantheonsite.io/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/saving-the-lives-of-moms-and.pdf

[3] Alex F. Peahl, Lily Rubin-Miller, Victoria Paterson, Hannah R. Jahnke, Avery Plough, *et al.* "Understanding Social Needs in Pregnancy: Prospective Validation of a Digital Short-Form Screening Tool and Patient Survey," *AJOG Global Reports*, January 6, 2023, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xagr.2022.100158

[4] National Partnership for Women & Children. "Raising the Bar: Designing Effective Delivery and Payment Programs to Advance Maternal and Infant Health Equity and Excellence," March 2023, https://nationalpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/rtb-designing-effective-delivery-payment.pdf

[5] Jennifer E. Enns, Nathan C. Nickel, Mariette Chartier, Dan Chateau, Rhonda Campbell, et al. "An Unconditional Prenatal Income Supplement Is Associated with Improved Birth and Early Childhood Outcomes among First Nations Children in Manitoba, Canada: A Population-Based Cohort Study," *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, April 20, 2021, https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-021-03782-w

[6] Mary Bogle and Sonia Torres Rodríguez. *Direct Cash Transfer as a Vehicle for Speed, Inclusivity, and Equity: The Greater Washington Community Foundation's Response to COVID-19*, Urban Institute, August 2021, https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/104695/direct-cash-transfer-as-a-vehicle-for-speed-inclusivity-and-equity_3.pdf

[7] Expecting Justice Abundant Birth Project, https://expectingjustice.org/about-abp/; Zea Malawa. "Justice While Black: Cultivating Safer Birth Practices for Birthing People," BMM Tufts, April 15, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUwnVOc7NjA

Find detailed recommendations and more resources at **nationalpartnership.org/raisingthebar**

**national partnership
for women & families**