

Social Needs Screening and Intervention (SNS-E)

Purpose of the SNS-E measure

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) developed this measure as part of an organization-wide effort to advance health equity and provide accountability for assessing and addressing the food, housing and transportation needs of patient populations. These social needs have been identified as high priority and actionable by a multitude of health system entities, including health plans, providers and other key stakeholders, yet most health care quality measures continue to focus on clinical processes and outcomes. There are currently no national health plan measures that assess and address a patient’s social needs. NCQA sees this as a critical quality measurement gap to fill.



Measure

The SNS-E measure is met by collecting the responses to the corresponding approved questions with a logical observation identifier name and code (LOINC) question and response.

- Food screening: The percentage of members who were screened for unmet food needs.
- Food intervention: The percentage of members who received a corresponding intervention within one month of screening positive for unmet food needs.
- Housing screening: The percentage of members who were screened for unmet housing needs.
- Housing intervention: The percentage of members who received a corresponding intervention within one month of screening positive for unmet housing needs.
- Transportation screening: The percentage of members who were screened for unmet transportation needs.
- Transportation intervention: The percentage of members who received a corresponding intervention within one month of screening positive for unmet transportation needs.

An intervention may include any of these eight categories: assistance, assessment, counseling, coordination, education, evaluation of eligibility, provision or referral.

Measurement period

January 1 through December 31.

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Eligible population

Members of any age enrolled at the start of the measurement year who meet the criteria below for participation.

Product line	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medi-Cal
Age (as of the start of the measurement year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ≤ 17 years • 18–64 years • 65 and older

Exclusions

- Members in hospice or using hospice services any time during the measurement period.
- Medicare members 66 years of age and older by the end of the measurement period who meet any of the following:
 - Enrolled in an Institutional Special Needs Plans (I-SNP) any time during the measurement period.
 - Living long-term in an institution any time during the measurement period, as identified by the long-term institutionalized (LTI) flag in the Monthly Membership Detail Data File. Use the run date of the file to determine if a member had an LTI flag during the measurement period.
 - Members in hospice services or elect to use a hospice benefit any time during the measurement period.
 - Members who die any time during the measurement year.

Definitions

Food insecurity	Uncertain, limited, or unstable access to food that is: adequate in quantity and in nutritional quality; culturally acceptable; safe and acquired in socially acceptable ways.
Housing instability	Currently housed consistently but experiencing any of the following circumstances in the past 12 months: being behind on rent or mortgage, multiple moves, cost burden or risk of eviction.
Homelessness	Currently living in an environment that is not meant for permanent human habitation (e.g., cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, on the street), not having a consistent place to sleep at night, or because of economic difficulties, currently living in a shelter, motel, temporary or transitional living situation.
Housing inadequacy	Housing does not meet habitability standards.
Participation	The identifiers and descriptors for each organization’s coverage used to define members’ eligibility for measure reporting. Allocation for reporting is based on eligibility during the participation period.
Participation period	The measurement period.
Transportation insecurity	Uncertain, limited or no access to safe, reliable, accessible, affordable and socially acceptable transportation infrastructure and modalities necessary for maintaining one’s health, well-being or livelihood.

Compliance

How is the SNS-E compliance measure met?

The SNS-E measure is met by collecting the responses to the corresponding approved questions with a logical observation identifier name and code (LOINC) question and response.

During the measurement period, upon the first positive screen finding, an intervention must be provided on or up to 30 days after the date of the screening. The intervention must correspond to the type of need identified as follows:

- Food insecurity screen – must be met by a food insecurity intervention.
- Housing instability or homelessness screen – must be met by a housing instability or homelessness intervention.
- Housing inadequacy screen – must be met by a housing inadequacy intervention.
- Transportation insecurity screen – must be met by a transportation insecurity intervention.

An intervention may include any of these eight categories: assistance, assessment, counseling, coordination, education, evaluation of eligibility, provision or referral.

Examples of approved screening instruments

Pages 3 to 12 are lists of specific tools or questionnaires that are considered valid for assessing different social needs (such as food insecurity, housing instability or transportation access), along with their corresponding LOINC codes which are unique identifiers used to standardize the data collected from these instruments in electronic health records.

Food insecurity

Screening instrument	Questions	Response	LOINC codes		
			Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Accountable Health Communities (AHC) Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) Screening Tool	Within the past 12 months, you worried that your food would run out before you got money to buy more.	Often true	88122-7	LA28397-0	
		Sometimes true		LA6729-3	
		Never true			LA28398-8
		Don't know or refused			LA30968-4
	Within the past 12 months, the food you bought did not last and you did not have money to get more.	Often true	88123-5	LA28397-0	
		Sometimes true		LA6729-3	
		Never true			LA28398-8
		Don't know or refused			LA30968-4

(continued)

Food insecurity, continued

Screening instrument	Questions	Response	LOINC codes		
			Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Social Needs Screening Tool	Within the past 12 months, you worried that your food would run out before you got money to buy more.	Often true	88122-7	LA28397-0	
		Sometimes true		LA6729-3	
		Never true			LA28398-8
		Don't know or refused			LA30968-4
	Within the past 12 months, the food you bought did not last and you did not have money to get more.	Often true	88123-5	LA28397-0	
		Sometimes true		LA6729-3	
		Never true			LA28398-8
		Don't know or refused			LA30968-4
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Social Needs Screening Tool—short form	Within the past 12 months, you worried that your food would run out before you got money to buy more.	Often true	88122-7	LA28397-0	
		Sometimes true		LA6729-3	
		Never true			LA28398-8
		Don't know or refused			LA30968-4
	Within the past 12 months, the food you bought did not last and you did not have money to get more.	Often true	88123-5	LA28397-0	
		Sometimes true		LA6729-3	
		Never true			LA28398-8
		Don't know or refused			LA30968-4
Health Leads Screening Panel ^{®1}	In the past 12 months, did you eat less than you felt you should because there was not enough money for food?	Yes	95251-5	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
Hunger Vital Sign ^{™1} (HVS)	Food insecurity risk.	At risk	88124-3	LA19952-3	
		No risk			LA19983-8
Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks and Experiences [PRAPARE] ^{®1}	Have you or any family members you live with been unable to get any of the following when it was really needed in the past year?	Food	93031-3	LA30125-1	
		No			LA32-8

¹ Proprietary; may be a cost or licensing requirement associated with use.

Food insecurity, continued

			LOINC codes		
Screening instrument	Questions	Response	Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Safe Environment for Every Kid (SEEK) ^{® 1}	In the past 12 months, did you worry that your food would run out before you could buy more?	Yes	95400-8	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
	In the past 12 months, did the food you bought just not last and you did not have money to get more?	Yes	95399-2	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
U.S. Household Food Security Survey [U.S. FSS]	Food security status.	Low food security	95264-8	LA30985-8	
		Very low food security		LA30986-6	
		Marginal food security			LA30984-1
		High food security			LA30983-3
U.S. Adult Food Security Survey [U.S. FSS]	Food security status.	Low food security	95264-8	LA30985-8	
		Very low food security		LA30986-6	
		Marginal food security			LA30984-1
		High food security			LA30983-3
U.S. Child Food Security Survey [U.S. FSS]	Food security status.	Low food security	95264-8	LA30985-8	
		Very low food security		LA30986-6	
		Marginal food security			LA30984-1
		High food security			LA30983-3
U.S. Household Food Security Survey–Six-Item Short Form [U.S. FSS]	Food security status.	Low food security	95264-8	LA30985-8	
		Very low food security		LA30986-6	
		Marginal food security			LA30984-1
		High food security			LA30983-3

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Food insecurity, continued

Screening instrument	Questions	Response	LOINC codes		
			Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
We Care Survey	Do you always have enough food for your family?	Yes	96434-6	LA32-8	
		No			LA33-6
WellRx Questionnaire	In the past 2 months, did you or others you live with eat smaller meals or skip meals because you didn't have money for food?	Yes	93668-2	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8

Housing instability and homelessness

Screening instrument	Questions	Response	LOINC codes		
			Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Accountable Health Communities (AHC) Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) Screening Tool	What is your housing situation today?	I have housing today, but I am worried about losing housing in the future.	71802-3	LA31994-9	
		I do not have housing (I am staying with others, in a hotel, in a shelter, living outside on the street, on a beach, in a car, abandoned building, bus or train station, or in a park).		LA31995-6	
		I have a steady place to live.			LA31993-1
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Social Needs Screening Tool	Are you worried or concerned that in the next two months you may not have stable housing that you own, rent, or stay in as a part of a household?	Yes	99550-6	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Social Needs Screening Tool—short form	What is your housing situation today?	I have housing today, but I am worried about losing housing in the future.	71802-3	LA31994-9	
		I do not have housing (I am staying with others, in a hotel, in a shelter, living outside on the street, on a beach, in a car, abandoned building, bus or train station, or in a park).		LA31995-6	
		I have a steady place to live.			LA31993-1

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Housing instability and homelessness, continued

Screening instrument	Questions	Response	LOINC codes		
			Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Children's Health Watch Housing Stability Vital Signs™ ¹	Behind on rent or mortgage in past 12 months.	Yes	98976-4	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
	Homeless in past 12 months.	Yes	98978-0	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
	Number of residential moves in past 12 months.		98977-2	≥3	
					<3
Health Leads Screening Panel ^{®1}	Are you worried that in the next 2 months, you might not have stable housing?	Yes	99550-6	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks and Experiences [PRAPARE] ^{®1}	What is your housing situation today?	I do not have housing (staying with others, in a hotel, in a shelter, living outside on the street, on a beach, in a car, or in a park).	71802-3	LA30190-5	
		I have a steady place to live.			LA30189-7
		I choose not to answer the question.			LA30122-8
	Are you worried about losing your housing?	Yes	93033-9	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
		I choose not to answer the question.			LA30122-8
We Care Survey	Do you think you are at risk of becoming homeless?	Yes	96441-1	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
WellRx Questionnaire	Are you homeless? Or worried that you might be in the future?	Yes	93669-0	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8

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Housing inadequacy

Screening instrument	Questions	Response	LOINC codes		
			Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Accountable Health Communities (AHC) Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) Screening Tool	Think about the place you live. Do you have problems with any of the following? (check all that apply)	Pests such as bugs, ants or mice	96778-6	LA31996-4	
		Mold		LA28580-1	
		Lead paint or pipes		LA31997-2	
		Lack of heat		LA31998-0	
		Oven or stove not working		LA31999-8	
		Smoke detectors missing or not working		LA32000-4	
		Water leaks		LA32001-2	
		None of the above			LA9-3
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Social Needs Screening Tool	Think about the place you live. Do you have problems with any of the following? (check all that apply)	Pests such as bugs, ants or mice	96778-6	LA32691-0	
		Mold		LA28580-1	
		Lead paint or pipes		LA32693-6	
		Lack of heat		LA32694-4	
		Oven or stove not working		LA32695-1	
		Smoke detectors missing or not working		LA32696-9	
		Water leaks		LA32001-2	
		None of the above			LA9-3
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Social Needs Screening Tool—short form	Think about the place you live. Do you have problems with any of the following? (check all that apply)	Pests such as bugs, ants or mice	96778-6	LA31996-4	
		Mold		LA28580-1	
		Lead paint or pipes		LA31997-2	
		Lack of heat		LA31998-0	
		Oven or stove not working		LA31999-8	
		Smoke detectors missing or not working		LA32000-4	
		Water leaks		LA32001-2	
		None of the above			LA9-3

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Housing inadequacy, continued

			LOINC codes		
Screening instrument	Questions	Response	Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Norwalk Community Health Center Screening Tool [NCHC]	Is your health or families' health affected by conditions at home?	Yes	99134-9	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
	Check all conditions that exist in the patient's home.	Pests such as bugs, ants or mice	99135-6	LA31996-4	
		Mold		LA28580-1	
		Lead paint or pipes		LA31997-2	
		Lack of heat		LA31998-0	
		Oven or stove not working		LA31999-8	
		Smoke detectors missing or not working		LA32000-4	
		Water leaks		LA32001-2	
		None of the above			LA9-3

Transportation insecurity

			LOINC codes		
Screening instrument	Questions	Response	Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Accountable Health Communities (AHC) Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) Screening Tool	In the past 12 months, has lack of reliable transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work or from getting things needed for daily living?	Yes	93030-5	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Social Needs Screening Tool	Do you put off or neglect going to the doctor because of distance or transportation? Delayed medical care due to distance or lack of transportation?	Yes	99594-4	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Social Needs Screening Tool—short form	In the past 12 months, has lack of reliable transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work or from getting things needed for daily living?	Yes, it has kept me from medical appointments or getting medications.	93030-5	LA33093-8	
		Yes, it has kept me from non-medical meetings.		LA30134-3	
		No			LA32-8

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Transportation insecurity, continued

			LOINC codes		
Screening instrument	Questions	Response	Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Comprehensive Universal Behavior Screen (CUBS)	Tell us about your transportation/mobility.	My transportation is available and reliable, but limited and/or inconvenient; drivers are licensed and minimally insured.	89569-8	LA29232-8	
		My transportation is available, but unreliable, unpredictable, unaffordable; may have car but no insurance, license, etc.		LA29233-6	
		I have no access to transportation, public or private; may have car that is inoperable.		LA29234-4	
		My transportation is generally accessible to meet basic travel needs.			LA29231-0
		My transportation is readily available, affordable, and car is adequately insured.			LAA29230-2
Health Leads Screening Panel ^{®1}	In the past 12 months, have you ever had to go without health care because you did not have a way to get there?	Yes	99553-0	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8
Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility -Patient Assessment Instrument (IRF-PAI)—version 4.0 [CMS Assessment]	Has lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work, or from getting things needed for daily living?	Yes, it has kept me from medical appointments or from getting my medications.	93030-5	LA30133-5	
		Yes, it has kept me from non-medical meetings, appointments, work or from getting things that I need.		LA30134-3	
		No			LA32-8
		I choose not to answer the question.			LA30122-8

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Transportation insecurity, continued

			LOINC codes		
Screening instrument	Questions	Response	Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Outcome and assessment information set (OASIS) form— version E: Discharge from agency (CMS Assessment)	Has lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work or from getting things needed for daily living?	Yes, it has kept me from medical appointments or from getting my medications.	93030-5	LA30133-5	
		Yes, it has kept me from non-medical meetings, appointments, work or from getting things that I need.		LA30134-3	
		No			LA32-8
		I choose not to answer the question.			LA30122-8
Outcome and assessment information set (OASIS) form— version E: Resumption of Care (CMS Assessment) Start of Care (CMS Assessment)	Has lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work or from getting things needed for daily living?	Yes, it has kept me from medical appointments or from getting my medications	93030-5	LA30133-5	
		Yes, it has kept me from non-medical meetings, appointments, work or from getting things that I need.		LA30134-3	
		No			LA32-8
		I choose not to answer the question.			LA30122-8
Outcome and assessment information set (OASIS) form— version E: Start of Care (CMS Assessment)	Has lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work or from getting things needed for daily living?	Yes, it has kept me from medical appointments or from getting my medications	93030-5	LA30133-5	
		Yes, it has kept me from non-medical meetings, appointments, work or from getting things that I need.		LA30134-3	
		No			LA32-8
		I choose not to answer the question.			LA30122-8

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Transportation insecurity, continued

			LOINC codes		
Screening instrument	Questions	Response	Screening item	Positive finding	Negative finding
Protocol for Responding to and Assessing Patients' Assets, Risks and Experiences [PRAPARE] ^{®1}	Has lack of transportation kept you from medical appointments, meetings, work, or from getting things needed for daily living.	Yes, it has kept me from medical appointments or from getting my medications.	93030-5	LA30133-5	
		Yes, it has kept me from non-medical meetings, appointments, work or from getting things that I need.		LA30134-3	
		No			LA32-8
		I choose not to answer the question.			LA30122-8
PROMIS ^{®1}	Current level of confidence I can use public transportation.	I am not at all confident.	92358-1	LA30024-6	
		I am a little confident.		LA30026-1	
		I am somewhat confident.		LA30027-9	
		I am quite confident.			LA30028-7
		I am very confident.			LA30029-5
WellRx Questionnaire	Do you have trouble finding or paying for transportation?	Yes	93671-6	LA33-6	
		No			LA32-8

¹ Proprietary; may be a cost or licensing requirement associated with use.

References:

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Health Insurance Exchange, 2024 Quality Rating System Measure Technical Specifications, <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/2024-qrs-measure-technical-specifications-september-2023.pdf>

The National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) Proposed New Measure for HEDIS Measurement Year (MY) 2023: Social Need Screening and Intervention (SNS-E), <https://www.ncqa.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/04.-SNS-E.pdf>

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