

Raising Awareness of CDC's Sepsis Aftercare Code Z51.A

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Our Research Center Director Kathryn Bowles, PhD, RN, FAAN, is leading a national effort to raise awareness of the new ICD-10-CM sepsis aftercare code (Z51.A).

This code, which was inspired by our research findings, helps ensure that a patient's history of sepsis remains visible in the medical record as they transition across care settings—enabling outpatient, post-acute, and home care clinicians to identify sepsis survivors who may require closer monitoring and follow-up after hospital discharge.

Dr. Bowles, who also played a key role in helping secure the code's adoption by the CDC, has been presenting on sepsis survivorship and the importance of the new code to healthcare organizations nationwide, including the Healthcare Association of New York State, the Patient-Centered Medical Home Learning Network of Pennsylvania, and the Sepsis Alliance's Unite for Sepsis conference.

Why it matters: Once a sepsis survivor leaves the hospital, their history of sepsis is often not clearly communicated to downstream providers. As a result, clinicians may not recognize patients who are at increased risk for complications, functional decline, and readmission. By including the Z51.A Encounter for Sepsis Aftercare code in discharge documentation, hospitals can help ensure that sepsis survivors are identified throughout the continuum of care, allowing post-acute providers to deliver more targeted follow-up and support during recovery.

To learn more about our Center for Home Care Policy & Research or to contact the Research Center team, [click here](#).

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