

# Sample Questionnaires to Determine Whether a Patient is Homeless as Defined in State Law

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**NOTE:** The hospital is not required to ask these questions verbatim. These sample questionnaires are intended to provide helpful guidance for the hospital to develop its own tool, not a required script. Additional examples are available at <https://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ask-code-documenting-homelessness-throughout-the-healthcare-system.pdf>.

If you're not sure whether a patient is legally "homeless" under state law, you may wish to err on the safe side and treat the patient according to your hospital's homeless patient discharge planning policy.

## EXAMPLE 1

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**Question 1:** Do you have a steady place to stay at night, like an apartment, house, dorm, or nursing facility?

If **YES:** Stop. The person is not considered "homeless." Document the person's address if it isn't already in the medical record.

If **NO,** continue to Question 2.

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**Question 2:** Where do you usually sleep at night?

If the answer is any of the following, the patient is considered homeless:

- Street, park, beach, under bridge, in doorway, abandoned building
- Car
- Recreational vehicle (RV) or mobile home moved each night or almost each night. (If an RV or mobile home is parked in the same place every night, the patient is not considered homeless.)
- Tent
- Hotel, motel, YMCA, church
- Airport, bus station, train station
- Different place every night
- Makeshift cardboard covering
- Shelter (supervised publicly- or privately-operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations)
- Public or private place that is not designed to provide temporary living accommodations or to be used as a sleeping accommodation for human beings

If the answer is any of the following, a judgment call should be made, because the law is not clear:

- Transitional housing
- Sober living center
- Tent encampment established for long-term living
- Friend's couch

For each of the judgment call circumstances listed above (or other answers not listed above), consider how long the patient *is allowed to* stay in the transitional housing, center, encampment, or couch. The shorter the maximum stay, the more likely the patient should be considered homeless.

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## **EXAMPLE 2**

This option is based on Yale New Haven Hospital screening tool.

**Question 1:** Where have you been living during the past two months?

**Question 2:** Is this reliable housing that you own, rent, or stay in as part of a household?

**Question 3:** Are you able to return and stay there after discharge?

- a. If yes, are you able to receive a home health or a visiting nurse there?
- b. If no, consider whether the patient has a post-discharge medical need that requires a home health visit or other recuperative care.