



# MEDICAL POLICY STATEMENT

## Kentucky Marketplace

Policy Name & Number	Date Effective
Hypoglossal Nerve Stimulation for the Treatment of Obstructive Sleep Apnea KY MP MM-1286	06/01/2022-04/30/2023
Policy Type	
MEDICAL	

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Medical Policy Statements prepared by CareSource and its affiliates do not ensure an authorization or payment of services. Please refer to the plan contract (often referred to as the Evidence of Coverage) for the service(s) referenced in the Medical Policy Statement. If there is a conflict between the Medical Policy Statement and the plan contract (i.e., Evidence of Coverage), then the plan contract (i.e., Evidence of Coverage) will be the controlling document used to make the determination. According to the rules of Mental Health Parity Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA), coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of a behavioral health disorder will not be subject to any limitations that are less favorable than the limitations that apply to medical conditions as covered under this policy.

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## A. Subject

### **Hypoglossal Nerve Stimulation for the Treatment of Obstructive Sleep Apnea**

## B. Background

Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA) is a chronic disorder characterized by recurrent episodes of upper airway obstruction during sleep. The untreated disruption of airflow caused by OSA is associated with multiple comorbidities, such as nocturnal hypoxemia, cardiac arrhythmia, hypertension, an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, cessation of breathing, loud snoring, and daytime sleepiness. Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy, which delivers oxygen in a continuous stream independent of whether the patient is taking or exhaling a breath, has been the mainstay therapy for treatment of OSA. However, despite its efficacy and manufacturers' redesigns to make the devices more comfortable, a large percentage of patients are unable to tolerate CPAP therapy, and adherence is low. As a result, alternative treatment strategies are necessary.

The hypoglossal nerve is the twelfth cranial nerve and innervates all the extrinsic and intrinsic muscles of the tongue, except for the palatoglossus, which is innervated by the vagus nerve. It is a nerve with a solely motor function. The nerve arises from the hypoglossal nucleus in the brain stem as a number of small rootlets, passes through the hypoglossal canal and down through the neck, and eventually passes up again over the tongue muscles it supplies into the tongue. There are two hypoglossal nerves in the body: one on the left, and one on the right.

The hypoglossal nerve stimulator (HNS) is an implanted medical device that works to reduce the occurrence of OSA by electrically stimulating the hypoglossal nerve to the tongue. A surgeon implants the system containing a neurostimulator subcutaneously in the patient's chest, with one lead attached to the patient's hypoglossal nerve (cranial nerve XII) at the base of the tongue and the other lead implanted in the patient's chest.

The lead in the chest consists of a pressure sensor that detects breathing. Information about respiration rate is relayed to the device, which stimulates the hypoglossal nerve in the tongue. When stimulated, the tongue moves forward, opening the airway. The patient can operate the device by remote control, which the patient activates before going to sleep. The device turns on after twenty (20) minutes to minimize disrupting the patient's sleep onset. The device must be manually turned off via remote when the patient wakes.

## C. Definitions

- **Drug Induced Sleep Endoscopy (DISE)** - A diagnostic tool to assess the upper airway of snorers and OSA patients in conditions that mimic natural sleep. Due to documented inconsistency in determining if complete concentric collapse (CCC) is present, the inserting provider shall be certified by the FDA-approved manufacturer's second opinion service of validation via video clip submissions of at least 80% agreement in at least 15 consecutive studies. Inserting providers shall have documentation to submit to this contractor if necessary.

- **Hypoglossal Nerve** - The twelfth cranial nerve that stimulates all the extrinsic and intrinsic muscles of the tongue, except for the palatoglossus, which is stimulated by the vagus nerve.
- **Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA)** - A disease characterized by recurrent episodes of upper airway obstruction during sleep.

#### D. Policy

- I. CareSource considers hypoglossal nerve stimulation for the treatment of moderate to severe obstructive sleep apnea medically necessary when **all** of the following clinical criteria is met:
  - A. A pulmonary specialist, internal medicine provider or sleep medicine specialist verifies the member is eligible for treatment; and
  - B. If the member has a cardiac condition, this requires clearance from their cardiologist; and
  - C. The member is 22 years of age or older; and
  - D. Body mass index (BMI) is less than 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup>; and
  - E. An in-lab or home sleep study has been performed no more than 24 months before the first consultation of the HGNS implant and there has not been a change of body weight by 10% or more from the time of that diagnostic sleep study; and
  - F. Member has predominantly obstructive events (defined as central and mixed apneas less than 25% of the total apnea-hypopnea index (AHI); and
  - G. Apnea Hypopnea Index (AHI) is 15 to 65 events per hour; and
  - H. Member has documentation that demonstrates CPAP failure:
    1. Defined as AHI greater than 15 despite CPAP usage; or
    2. CPAP intolerance (defined as less than 4 hours per night, 5 nights per week or the CPAP has been returned); or
    3. Including shared decision making that the patient was intolerant of CPAP despite consultation with a sleep expert; and
  - I. Absence of complete concentric collapse at the soft palate level as seen on a drug-induced sleep endoscopy (DISE) procedure; and
  - J. No other anatomical findings that would compromise performance of device (e.g., tonsil size 3 or 4 per standardized tonsillar hypertrophy grading scale).
- II. CareSource considers the following not medically reasonable and necessary and will be denied:
  - A. Hypoglossal nerve neurostimulation is considered not medically reasonable and necessary for all other indications;
  - B. Non-FDA-approved hypoglossal nerve neurostimulation is considered not medically reasonable and necessary for the treatment of adult obstructive sleep apnea due to insufficient evidence of being safe and effective;
  - C. Hypoglossal nerve neurostimulation is considered **not** medically reasonable and necessary when any of the following contraindications are present:
    1. Members with central and mixed apneas that make up more than one-quarter of the total AHI;



2. Members with an implantable device could experience unintended interaction with the HGNS implant system;
3. BMI equal to or greater than 35;
4. Neuromuscular disease;
5. Hypoglossal-nerve palsy;
6. Severe restrictive or obstructive pulmonary disease;
7. Moderate-to-severe pulmonary arterial hypertension;
8. Severe valvular heart disease;
9. New York Heart Association class III or IV heart failure;
10. Recent myocardial infarction or severe cardiac arrhythmias (within the past 6 months);
11. Persistent uncontrolled hypertension despite medication use;
12. An active, serious mental illness that reduces the ability to carry out Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and would interfere with the patient's ability to operate the HNS and report problems to the attending provider;
13. Coexisting non-respiratory sleep disorders that would confound functional sleep assessment;
14. Members who are, or who plan to become pregnant;
15. Members who require Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) with Inspire model 3024;
16. Members who require MRI with Inspire model 3028, can undergo MRI on the head and extremities if certain conditions and precautions are met. (Please refer to the manufacturer guidelines for this model and future models for more information);
17. Members who are unable or do not have the necessary assistance to operate the sleep remote;
18. Members with any condition or procedure that has compromised neurological control of the upper airway.

E. Conditions of Coverage  
 NA

F. Related Policies/Rules  
 NA

G. Review/Revision History

DATE		ACTION
<b>Date Issued</b>	03/16/2022	New Policy
<b>Date Revised</b>		
<b>Date Effective</b>	06/01/2022	
<b>Date Archived</b>	04/30/2023	This Policy is no longer active and has been archived. Please note that there could be other Policies that may have some of the same rules incorporated and CareSource reserves the right to follow CMS/State/NCCI guidelines without a formal documented Policy.

The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

## H. References

1. American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS). Position Statement: Hypoglossal Nerve Stimulation for Treatment of Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA). (2021 April 22). Retrieved February 15, 2022 from [www.entnet.org](http://www.entnet.org).
2. Baptista, Peter M et al. Hypoglossal Nerve Stimulation in the Treatment of Obstructive Sleep Apnea: Patient Selection and New Perspectives. *Nature and Science of Sleep* vol. 12 151-159. Retrieved February 15, 2022 from [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov).
3. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. LCD - Hypoglossal Nerve Stimulation for the Treatment of Obstructive Sleep Apnea (L38307) (04/01/2020). Retrieved February 15, 2022 from [www.cms.gov](http://www.cms.gov).
4. Tietjens JR, Claman D, Kezirian EJ, et al. Obstructive Sleep Apnea in Cardiovascular Disease: A Review of the Literature and Proposed Multidisciplinary Clinical Management Strategy. *J Am Heart Assoc.* 2019;8(1):e010440. Retrieved February 15, 2022 from [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov).

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