

MEDICAL POLICY STATEMENT Michigan Marketplace	
Policy Name & Number	Date Effective
Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation for Treatment of Depression- MI MP-MM-1633	09/01/2025
Policy Type	
MEDICAL	

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A. Subject**Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation for Treatment of Depression****B. Background**

Transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) was originally introduced in 1985 as a noninvasive treatment modality for treatment-resistant Major Depressive Disorder (MDD). Brief, repetitive pulses of magnetic energy are sent to the scalp via a large electromagnetic coil, generating a low level of electrical stimulation. These magnetic fields pass through the skull and induce electrical currents that depolarize neurons in a focal area of the surface cortex. The magnetic field generated by this type of stimulation is very small and cannot be felt by the patient but is strong enough to flow into the brain without inducing seizures or creating a need for anesthesia.

TMS is generally an outpatient procedure with conscious patients and sessions that vary between 30 to 40 minutes. Treatment can be delivered as a single pulse or as a series of pulses. Despite variability in the number of pulses delivered per session and the number of sessions per patient, research indicates that typical courses of TMS consist of treatment up to 5 days a week for up to 6 weeks. A tapering schedule is used to end treatment.

C. Definitions

- **Acute (Index) Course of Treatment** – The initial series of treatment given to relieve acute symptoms of the MDD.
- **Adequate Trial** – Taking a drug at least 4 weeks at or near the maximum dose for the specific medication as approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or documentation exists that higher doses were not tolerated when the dose is less than the FDA-approved maximum.
- **Continuation TMS** – Treatment beginning after the acute/index course lasting up to 6 months and designed to prevent the worsening of symptoms and continued treatment for a depressive episode that has not yet remitted.
- **Depression Rating Scale** – Scales standardized for national use that reliably assess the range of symptoms, both type and magnitude, most commonly observed in adults with MDD. Listed below are examples of commonly used scales:
 - Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)
 - Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)
 - Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAM-D)
 - Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)
 - Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology (QIDS)
- **Maintenance TMS** – Regularly scheduled TMS sessions on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis to prevent relapse of depressive symptoms.
- **Medication Side Effects** – Unexpected effects that cause significant distress, inhibit daily function, have the potential to worsen health, or are life threatening.
- **Remission** – The absence of significant signs or symptoms of a major depressive episode during the previous 2 months.

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

D. Policy

- I. A review of medical necessity is required for initial and continuation courses of TMS.
- II. TMS is considered medically necessary when **all** the following criteria are met:
 - A. *Member is 18 years of age or older.*
 - B. *There is a confirmed diagnosis of MDD, single or recurrent, with a current severe episode as evidenced by a recent score on a standardized depression rating scale and at least 1 of the following:*
 1. *resistance to treatment evidenced by a lack of a clinically significant response during a current or previous depressive episode **and** adequate trials of 2 antidepressant agents, including at least 2 different agent classes at or near the maximum effective dose and duration for each class approved by the FDA*
 2. *inability to tolerate a therapeutic dose of medications evidenced by documentation in the medical record of 2 trials of antidepressant agents with distinct side effects*
 3. *history of response to TMS in a previous depressive episode, as evidenced by a greater than 50% improvement on a standardized depression rating scale*
 4. *currently receiving or is a candidate for and has declined electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) with TMS considered a less invasive treatment option*
 - C. *Completion of a trial of evidence-based psychotherapy for MDD with appropriate frequency and duration without significant improvement for 12 weeks, alone or combined with psychopharmacologic agents.*
 - D. *None of the following conditions or contraindications are present:*
 1. *epilepsy or history of seizure or presence of other neurologic diseases that may lower seizure threshold (eg, cerebrovascular accident, severe head trauma, increased intracranial pressure)*
 2. *acute or chronic psychotic symptoms or disorders (eg, schizophrenia, schizophreniform, schizoaffective disorder)*
 3. *cochlear implants or deep brain stimulators*
 4. *current use of substances that may significantly lower seizure threshold (eg, alcohol or stimulants)*
 5. *metallic hardware or implanted magnetic-sensitive medical devices (eg, implanted cardioverter-defibrillators, pacemakers, metal aneurysm clips or coils) at a distance within the electromagnetic field of the discharging coil (eg, less than or equal to 30 cm to the discharging coil)*
 6. *unstable medical disorders*
- III. *Additional treatment courses of TMS are considered medically necessary when **all** the following have been met:*
 - A. *30 days since last session of TMS*
 - B. *a history of response to TMS in a previous depressive episode evidenced by a greater than 50% improvement on a standardized depression rating scale*
 - C. *medical necessity is met per Section II above*

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IV. TMS maintenance treatment is not considered medically necessary. There is not sufficient evidence in peer reviewed literature to assess net benefit versus harm for patients.

V. Additional criteria:

- A. *TMS must be administered by an FDA-cleared device for the treatment of MDD in a safe and effective manner according to the manufacturer's user manual and specified stimulation parameters.*
- B. *A treatment course should not exceed 5 days a week for 6 weeks (total of 30 sessions), followed by a 3-week taper of 3 treatments in 1 week, 2 treatments the next week, and 1 treatment in the last week.*
- C. TMS can be ordered by and performed under direction of a neurologist, licensed psychiatrist, or psychiatric nurse practitioner who has examined the member, reviewed the record when it is within scope of practice, and has experience in administering TMS therapy within scope of practice.

E. Conditions of Coverage
NA

F. Related Policies/Rules
Medical Necessity Determinations

G. Review/Revision History

	DATE	ACTION
Date Issued	07/17/2024	New market. Approved at Committee.
Date Revised	06/04/2025	Annual review. Changed medication trial from 4 to 2 to match MCG. Updated references. Approved at Committee.
Date Effective	09/01/2025	
Date Archived		

H. References

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