



# MEDICAL POLICY STATEMENT

## Ohio Medicaid

Policy Name & Number	Date Effective
Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation for Treatment of Depression- OH MCD-MM-0233	11/01/2025-05/31/2026
Policy Type	
<b>MEDICAL</b>	

Medical Policy Statement prepared by CareSource and its affiliates are derived from literature based on and supported by clinical guidelines, nationally recognized utilization and technology assessment guidelines, other medical management industry standards, and published MCO clinical policy guidelines. Medically necessary services include, but are not limited to, those health care services or supplies that are proper and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of disease, illness, or injury and without which the patient can be expected to suffer prolonged, increased or new morbidity, impairment of function, dysfunction of a body organ or part, or significant pain and discomfort. These services meet the standards of good medical practice in the local area, are the lowest cost alternative, and are not provided mainly for the convenience of the member or provider. Medically necessary services also include those services defined in any Evidence of Coverage documents, Medical Policy Statements, Provider Manuals, Member Handbooks, and/or other policies and procedures.

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

**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 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** – Standardized scales for national use that reliably assess the range of symptoms most commonly observed in adults with MDD, including type and magnitude. Listed below are examples of commonly used scales:
  - o Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)
  - o Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)
  - o Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAM-D)
  - o Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9)
  - o Quick Inventory of Depressive Symptomatology (QIDS)
- **Maintenance TMS** – Regularly scheduled TMS sessions on a weekly, biweekly, or monthly basis used 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 an MDD 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 or continuation courses of TMS.
- II. *Initial (acute/index) treatment is considered medically necessary when **ALL** the following criteria are met:*
  - A. *Member is 18 years of age or older.*
  - B. *Member has a confirmed diagnosis of major depressive disorder, 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. *Need for treatment, as indicated by 1 of the following:*
      - a. *resistance to treatment with documented adherence as evidenced by a lack of a clinically significant response during a current or previous depressive episode and 2 or more classes of antidepressant agents at or near maximum effective dose and duration approved by the FDA*
      - b. *inability to tolerate pharmacotherapy evidenced by 2 antidepressants with documented side effects*
    2. *Continuation of acute course of treatment, as indicated by*
      - a. *continuation of symptoms 30 days after index (acute) course of treatment*
      - b. *previous positive response to index (acute) course of treatment evidenced by a reduction of 50% in a depression severity rating scale as compared to baseline*
  - C. *None of the following conditions or contraindications are present:*
    1. *epilepsy, history of seizure or other neurologic disease 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, or 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).*
- III. Maintenance treatment with TMS is not considered medically necessary. There is not sufficient evidence in peer reviewed literature to assess net benefit versus harm for patients.
- IV. 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.*

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- 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 the scope of practice, and has experience in administering TMS therapy within the scope of practice.

E. Conditions of Coverage  
NA

F. Related Policies/Rules  
Medical Necessity Determinations

G. Review/Revision History

DATE		ACTION
<b>Date Issued</b>	07/12/2018	
<b>Date Revised</b>	11/11/2020 10/28/2021 08/31/2022 01/19/2023 07/19/2023 06/19/2024 06/04/2025	Removed a definition, added neurologist. Revised and expanded definitions. Added Section II and IV. Updated background, definitions, & criteria (MCG 26 <sup>th</sup> ed). Updated title for clarity. Annual review. Updated references. Approved at Committee. Annual review. Updated references. Approved at Committee. Annual review. Deleted III (repeat of D.II.B.2) and updated references. Approved at Committee.
<b>Date Effective</b>	11/01/2025	
<b>Date Archived</b>	05/31/2026	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.

H. References

1. American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revised*. American Psychiatric Association; 2022.
2. Holtzheimer PE. Unipolar major depression: administering transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). UptoDate. Updated January 22, 2025. Accessed May 30, 2025. [www.uptodate.com](http://www.uptodate.com)
3. Holtzheimer PE. Unipolar depression in adults: indications, efficacy, and safety of transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). UptoDate. Updated January 22, 2025. Accessed May 30, 2025. [www.uptodate.com](http://www.uptodate.com)
4. Jarrett R, Vittengl J. Unipolar depression in adults: continuation and maintenance treatment. UptoDate. Updated October 3, 2024. Accessed May 30, 2025. [www.uptodate.com](http://www.uptodate.com)
5. National Institute of Mental Health. *Brain Stimulation Therapies*. National Institutes of Health; 2023. NIH publication 0925-0648. Accessed May 30, 2025. [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

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6. Perera T, George MS, 5rammar G, et al. The Clinical TMS Society consensus review and treatment recommendations for TMS therapy for major depressive disorder. *Brain Stimul.* 2016;9(3):336-346. doi:10.1016/j.brs.2016.03.010
7. Thase M, Connolly R. Unipolar depression in adults: choosing treatment for resistant depression. UptoDate. Updated November 2, 2023. Accessed May 30, 2025. [www.uptodate.com](http://www.uptodate.com)
8. Transcranial magnetic stimulation: B-801-T. MCG Health, 28th edit. Updated March 14, 2024. Accessed May 30, 2025. [www.careweb.careguidelines.com](http://www.careweb.careguidelines.com)

Approved by Ohio Department of Medicaid 08/12/2025

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