



New York Mainstream Medicaid Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

Policy Number: BH803NY122024
Effective Date: December 17, 2024

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Introduction & Instructions for Use

Introduction

The following State or Contract Specific Clinical Criteria defined by state regulations or contractual requirements are used to make medical necessity determinations, mandated for members of behavioral health plans managed by Optum and U.S. Behavioral Health Plan, California (doing business as Optum Health Behavioral Solutions of California (“Optum-CA”)).

Other Clinical Criteria may apply when making behavioral health medical necessity determinations for members of behavioral health plans managed by Optum®. These may be externally developed by independent third parties used in conjunction with or in place of these Clinical Criteria when required, or when state or contractual requirements are absent for certain covered services.

Instructions for Use

When deciding coverage, the member’s specific benefits must be referenced. All reviewers must first identify member eligibility, the member-specific benefit plan coverage, and any federal or state regulatory requirements that supersede the member’s benefits prior to using these Clinical Criteria. In the event that the requested service or procedure is limited or excluded from the benefit, is defined differently or there is otherwise a conflict between this Clinical Criteria and the member’s specific benefit, the member’s specific benefit supersedes these Clinical Criteria.

These Clinical Criteria are provided for informational purposes and do not constitute medical advice.

Benefit Considerations

Prior Authorization and Pre-Service Notification

- For inpatient admissions that require prior authorization or notification for pre-service scheduled treatment, these notifications must occur at least five (5) business days before admission. Notification of unscheduled treatment (including Emergency admissions) should occur as soon as is reasonably possible. In the event that Optum is not notified of an

inpatient admission with ECT, benefits may be reduced. Check the member's specific benefit plan document for the applicable penalty and allowance of a grace period before applying a penalty for failure to notify Optum as required.

Description of Service

Electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is a treatment device used for treating severe psychiatric illness by applying a brief intense electrical current to precise locations on the head to induce a seizure that lasts less than one minute. ECT is delivered in inpatient or outpatient settings and administered by a skilled psychiatrist privileged to perform ECT along with an anesthesiologist, and a nurse or physician assistant. ECT has been extensively studied with the longest history of use (Quevedo et al., 2022; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2022).

Coverage Rationale

- ECT is medically necessary to treat severe, treatment-resistant depression, and may also be useful in treating individuals with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia that have not responded to other treatments (APA, 2022; Quevedo et al., 2022; VA/DoD, 2022).
- ECT is not medically necessary for any of the following:
 - Multiple-seizure electroconvulsive therapy (MECT). The efficacy of ECT for these indications has not been verified by in well-designed controlled trials. In addition, studies have demonstrated an increased risk of adverse effects with multiple seizures (CMS NCD, 2003).
 - Other diagnoses in the absence of major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia disorder, including, but not limited to any of the following:
 - Substance use disorders (VA/DoD, 2021);
 - Autism spectrum disorders (National Autism Center, 2022; National Autism Association, 2023);
 - Obsessive-compulsive disorder (APA, 2007; Anxiety & Depression Association of America, 2015);
 - Posttraumatic stress disorder (VA/DoD, 2023).
- The requested service or procedure must be reviewed against the language in the member's benefit document. When the requested service or procedure is limited or excluded from the member's benefit document, or is otherwise defined differently, it is the terms of the member's benefit document that prevails.
- Per the specific requirements of the plan, health care services or supplies may not be covered when inconsistent with evidence-based clinical guidelines.

References

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Anxiety & Depression Association of America. (2015). Clinical Practice Overview for OCD. ADAA website: <https://adaa.org/resources-professionals/practice-guidelines-ocd>.

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. (2003). *National coverage determination (NCD) for multiple electroconvulsive therapy (MECT) (160.25)*. CMS website: <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/ncd-details.aspx?NCDId=278&ncdver=1&DocID=160.25&bc=gAAAAAgAAAA&>.

Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense (VA/DoD). (2022). Clinical Practice Guidelines for the Management of Major Depressive Disorder. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website: <https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/MH/mdd/>.

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National Autism Association. (2023). Autism therapies. NAA website: <https://nationalautismassociation.org/about-autism/autism-treatment-2/therapies/>.

National Autism Center. (2022). National Standards Project, Phase 1: 2009 and Phase 2: 2015. National Autism Center website: <https://www.nationalautismcenter.org/national-standards-project/>.

Quevedo, J., Riva-Posse, P., & Bobo, W.V. (2022). ECT for Treatment-Resistant Depression. In Drake & Maixner (Eds.), *Managing treatment-resistant depression* (pp. 293-308). Elsevier Publishing.

Revision History

Date	Summary of Changes
12/17/2024	Version 1