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Medical Benefit		Effective Date: 07/01/18	Next Review Date: 05/21
Preauthorization	No	Review Dates: 09/07, 11/08, 09/09, 09/10, 09/11, 07/12, 05/13, 05/14, 05/15, 05/16, 05/17, 05/18, 05/19, 05/20	

Preauthorization is not required.

The following protocol contains medical necessity criteria that apply for this service. The criteria are also applicable to services provided in the local Medicare Advantage operating area for those members, unless separate Medicare Advantage criteria are indicated. If the criteria are not met, reimbursement will be denied and the patient cannot be billed. Please note that payment for covered services is subject to eligibility and the limitations noted in the patient's contract at the time the services are rendered.

Populations	Interventions	Comparators	Outcomes
Individuals: • With essential tremor or tremor in Parkinson disease	Interventions of interest are: • Deep brain stimulation of the thalamus	Comparators of interest are: • Pharmacologic therapy • Permanent neuroablative procedure (e.g., thalamotomy, pallidotomy)	Relevant outcomes include: • Symptoms • Functional outcomes • Quality of life • Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: • With symptoms associated with Parkinson disease	Interventions of interest are: • Deep brain stimulation of the globus pallidus interna or subthalamic nucleus	Comparators of interest are: • Pharmacologic therapy • Physical and speech therapy	Relevant outcomes include: • Symptoms • Functional outcomes • Quality of life • Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: • With primary dystonia	Interventions of interest are: • Deep brain stimulation of the globus pallidus interna or subthalamic nucleus	Comparators of interest are: • Pharmacologic therapy • Permanent neuroablative procedure (e.g., thalamotomy, pallidotomy)	Relevant outcomes include: • Symptoms • Functional outcomes • Quality of life • Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: • With tardive dyskinesia or tardive dystonia	Interventions of interest are: • Deep brain stimulation	Comparators of interest are: • Pharmacologic therapy	Relevant outcomes include: • Symptoms • Functional outcomes • Quality of life • Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: • With drug-refractory epilepsy	Interventions of interest are: • Deep brain stimulation	Comparators of interest are: • Pharmacologic therapy • Vagus nerve stimulation	Relevant outcomes include: • Symptoms • Functional outcomes • Quality of life • Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: • With multiple sclerosis	Interventions of interest are: • Deep brain stimulation	Comparators of interest are: • Pharmacologic therapy	Relevant outcomes include: • Symptoms • Functional outcomes

Populations	Interventions	Comparators	Outcomes
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality of life Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With Tourette syndrome 	Interventions of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep brain stimulation 	Comparators of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pharmacologic therapy Cognitive-behavioral therapy 	Relevant outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms Functional outcomes Quality of life Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With cluster headaches or facial pain 	Interventions of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep brain stimulation 	Comparators of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pharmacologic therapy Botulinum toxin Conservative therapy (e.g., diet, exercise) 	Relevant outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms Functional outcomes Quality of life Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With treatment-resistant depression 	Interventions of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep brain stimulation 	Comparators of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pharmacologic therapy Behavioral therapy Psychotherapy 	Relevant outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms Functional outcomes Quality of life Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With obsessive-compulsive disorder 	Interventions of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep brain stimulation 	Comparators of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pharmacologic therapy Behavioral therapy Psychotherapy 	Relevant outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms Functional outcomes Quality of life Treatment-related morbidity
Individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With anorexia nervosa, alcohol addiction, Alzheimer disease, Huntington disease, or chronic pain 	Interventions of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deep brain stimulation 	Comparators of interest are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pharmacologic therapy Behavioral therapy Psychotherapy 	Relevant outcomes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms Functional outcomes Quality of life Treatment-related morbidity

DESCRIPTION

Deep brain stimulation (DBS) involves the stereotactic placement of an electrode into a central nervous system nucleus (e.g., hypothalamus, thalamus, globus pallidus, subthalamic nucleus). DBS is used as an alternative to permanent neuroablative procedures for control of essential tremor and Parkinson disease. DBS is also being evaluated for the treatment of a variety of other neurologic and psychiatric disorders.

SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE

For individuals who have essential tremor or tremor in Parkinson disease who receive DBS of the thalamus, the evidence includes a systematic review and case series. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, quality of life (QOL), and treatment-related morbidity. The systematic review (a TEC Assessment) concluded that there was sufficient evidence that DBS of the thalamus results in clinically significant tremor suppression and that outcomes after DBS were at least as good as thalamotomy. Subsequent studies reporting long-term follow-up have supported the conclusions of the TEC Assessment and found that tremors were effectively controlled

five to six years after DBS. The evidence is sufficient to determine that the technology results in a meaningful improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have symptoms (e.g., speech, motor fluctuations) associated with Parkinson disease (advanced or more than four years in duration with early motor symptoms) who receive DBS of the globus pallidus interna (GPI) or subthalamic nucleus (STN), the evidence includes randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and systematic reviews. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. One of the systematic reviews (a TEC Assessment) concluded that studies evaluating DBS of the GPI or STN have consistently demonstrated clinically significant improvements in outcomes (e.g., neurologic function). Other systematic reviews have also found significantly better outcomes after DBS than after a control intervention. An RCT in patients with levodopa-responsive Parkinson disease of at least four years in duration and uncontrolled motor symptoms found that QOL at two years was significantly higher when DBS was provided in addition to medical therapy. Meta-analyses of RCTs comparing DBS of the GPI with DBS of the STN have reported mixed findings and have not shown that one type of stimulation is clearly superior to the other. The evidence is sufficient to determine that the technology results in a meaningful improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have primary dystonia who receive DBS of the GPI or STN, the evidence includes systematic reviews, RCTs, and case series. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. A pooled analysis of 24 studies, mainly uncontrolled, found improvements in motor scores and disability scores after six months and at last follow-up (mean, 32 months). Both double-blind RCTs found that severity scores improved more after active than after sham stimulation. The evidence is sufficient to determine that the technology results in a meaningful improvement in the net health outcome.

For individuals who have tardive dyskinesia or tardive dystonia who receive DBS, the evidence includes an RCT and case series. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. Few studies were identified and they had small sample sizes (range, nine to 19 patients). The RCT did not report statistically significant improvement in the dystonia severity outcomes or the secondary outcomes related to disability and QOL but may have been under-powered. Additional studies, especially RCTs or other controlled studies, are needed. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have epilepsy who receive DBS, the evidence includes systematic reviews, RCTs and many observational studies. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. Two RCTs with more than 15 patients were identified. The larger RCT evaluated anterior thalamic nucleus DBS and reported that DBS had a positive impact on seizure frequency during some parts of the blinded trial phase but not others, and a substantial number of adverse events (in >30% of patients). There were no differences between groups in 50% responder rates, Liverpool Seizure Severity Scale, or Quality of Life in Epilepsy scores. A seven year open-label follow-up of the RCT included 66% of implanted patients; reasons for missing data were primarily related to adverse events or dissatisfaction with the device. Reduction in seizure frequency continued to improve during follow-up among the patients who continued follow-up. The smaller RCT (n=16) showed a benefit with DBS. Many small observational studies reported fewer seizures compared with baseline, however, without control groups, interpretation of these results is limited. Additional trials are required to determine the impact of DBS on patient outcomes. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have Tourette syndrome who receive DBS, the evidence includes observational studies, RCTs and systematic reviews. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. Two RCTs with 15 or more patients have been reported. One RCT found differences in severity of Tourette syndrome for active vs. sham at three months while the other RCT did not. Neither study demonstrated improvements in comorbid symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder or depression. Both studies reported high rates of serious adverse events. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have cluster headaches or facial pain who receive DBS, the evidence includes a randomized crossover study and case series. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. In the randomized study, the between-group difference in response rates did not differ significantly between active and sham stimulation phases. Additional RCTs or controlled studies are needed. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have treatment-resistant depression who receive DBS, the evidence includes RCTs and systematic reviews. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. The only double-blind, parallel-group RCT in patients with depression did not find that DBS significantly increased the response rate compared with sham; two other RCTs were stopped due to futility. A crossover controlled trial randomized patients to active or to sham stimulation after a year of open-label stimulation. There was a greater reduction in symptom scores after active stimulation but only in patients who were responders in the open-label phase; these findings might not be generalizable. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have obsessive-compulsive disorder who receive DBS, the evidence includes RCTs and systematic reviews. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. Among the RCTs on DBS for obsessive-compulsive disorder, only one has reported the outcome of greatest clinical interest (therapeutic response rate), and that trial did not find a statistically significant benefit for DBS compared with sham treatment. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health.

For individuals who have multiple sclerosis who receive DBS, the evidence includes an RCT. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. One RCT with ten multiple sclerosis patients is insufficient evidence on which to draw conclusions about the efficacy of DBS in this population. Additional trials are required. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

For individuals who have anorexia nervosa, alcohol addiction, Alzheimer disease, Huntington disease, or chronic pain who receive DBS, the evidence includes case series. Relevant outcomes are symptoms, functional outcomes, QOL, and treatment-related morbidity. RCTs are needed to evaluate the efficacy of DBS for these conditions. The evidence is insufficient to determine the effects of the technology on health outcomes.

POLICY

Unilateral deep brain stimulation of the thalamus may be considered **medically necessary** in patients with disabling, medically unresponsive tremor due to essential tremor or Parkinson disease.

Bilateral deep brain stimulation of the thalamus may be considered **medically necessary** in patients with disabling, medically unresponsive tremor in both upper limbs due to essential tremor or Parkinson disease.

Unilateral or bilateral deep brain stimulation of the globus pallidus or subthalamic nucleus may be considered **medically necessary** in the following patients:

- Those with Parkinson disease and ALL of the following:
 - a good response to levodopa; AND
 - motor complications not controlled by pharmacologic therapy; AND
 - one of the following:
 - a minimum score of 30 points on the motor portion of the Unified Parkinson Disease Rating Scale when the patient has been without medication for approximately 12 hours; OR

- Parkinson disease for at least four years
- Patients older than seven years with chronic, intractable (drug refractory) primary dystonia, including generalized and/or segmental dystonia, hemidystonia, and cervical dystonia (torticollis).

Deep brain stimulation for other movement disorders, including but not limited to tardive dyskinesia, multiple sclerosis, and post-traumatic dyskinesia, is considered **investigational**.

Deep brain stimulation for the treatment of chronic cluster headaches is considered **investigational**.

Deep brain stimulation for the treatment of other psychiatric or neurologic disorders, including but not limited to epilepsy, Tourette syndrome, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anorexia nervosa, alcohol addiction, Alzheimer disease, and chronic pain, is considered **investigational**.

POLICY GUIDELINES

Disabling, medically unresponsive tremor is defined as all of the following:

- tremor causing significant limitation in daily activities
- inadequate control by maximal dosage of medication for at least three months before implant.

Contraindications to DBS include:

- patients who are not good surgical risks because of unstable medical problems or because of the presence of a cardiac pacemaker
- patients who have medical conditions that require repeated magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)
- patients who have dementia that may interfere with the ability to cooperate
- patients who have had botulinum toxin injections within the last six months.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE

Medicare Advantage will consider unilateral or bilateral thalamic ventralis intermedius nucleus (VIM) deep brain stimulation (DBS) **medically necessary** for the treatment of essential tremor (ET) and/or Parkinsonian tremor and unilateral or bilateral subthalamic nucleus (STN) or globus pallidus interna (GPi) DBS for the treatment of Parkinson's disease (PD) only under the following conditions:

1. The devices are (FDA) approved devices for DBS or devices used in accordance with FDA approved protocols governing Category B Investigational Device Exemption (IDE) DBS clinical trials.
2. For thalamic VIM DBS to be considered reasonable and necessary, members must meet all of the following criteria:
 - a. Diagnosis of ET based on postural or kinetic tremors of hand(s) without other neurologic signs, or diagnosis of idiopathic PD (presence of at least two cardinal PD features [tremor, rigidity or bradykinesia]) which is of a tremor-dominant form.
 - b. Marked disabling tremor of at least level three or four on the Fahn-Tolosa-Marin Clinical Tremor Rating Scale (or equivalent scale) in the extremity intended for treatment, causing significant limitation in daily activities despite optimal medical therapy.
 - c. Willingness and ability to cooperate during conscious operative procedure, as well as during post-surgical evaluations, adjustments of medications and stimulator settings.

3. For STN or GPi DBS to be considered reasonable and necessary, patients must meet all of the following criteria:
 - a. Diagnosis of PD based on the presence of at least two cardinal PD features (tremor, rigidity or bradykinesia).
 - b. Advanced idiopathic PD as determined by the use of Hoehn and Yahr stage or Unified Parkinson's Disease Rating Scale (UPDRS) part III motor subscale.
 - c. L-dopa responsive with clearly defined "on" periods.
 - d. Persistent disabling Parkinson's symptoms or drug side effects (e.g., dyskinesias, motor fluctuations, or disabling "off" periods) despite optimal medical therapy.
 - e. Willingness and ability to cooperate during conscious operative procedure, as well as during post-surgical evaluations, adjustments of medications and stimulator settings.

DBS is **not medically necessary** for ET or PD members with any of the following:

1. Non-idiopathic Parkinson's disease or "Parkinson's Plus" syndromes.
2. Cognitive impairment, dementia or depression, which would be worsened by or would interfere with the patient's ability to benefit from DBS.
3. Current psychosis, alcohol abuse or other drug abuse.
4. Structural lesions such as basal ganglionic stroke, tumor or vascular malformation as etiology of the movement disorder.
5. Previous movement disorder surgery within the affected basal ganglion.
6. Significant medical, surgical, neurologic or orthopedic co-morbidities contraindicating DBS surgery or stimulation.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE POLICY GUIDELINES

Members who undergo DBS implantation should not be exposed to diathermy (deep heat treatment including shortwave diathermy, microwave diathermy and ultrasound diathermy) or any type of MRI, which may adversely affect the DBS system or adversely affect the brain around the implanted electrodes.

DBS should be performed with extreme caution in members with cardiac pacemakers or other electronically controlled implants, which may adversely affect or be affected by the DBS system.

BACKGROUND

DEEP BRAIN STIMULATION

DBS involves the stereotactic placement of an electrode into the brain (i.e., hypothalamus, thalamus, globus pallidus, or subthalamic nucleus). The electrode is initially attached to a temporary transcutaneous cable for short-term stimulation to validate treatment effectiveness. Several days later, the patient returns for permanent subcutaneous surgical implantation of the cable and a radiofrequency-coupled or battery-powered programmable stimulator. The electrode is typically implanted unilaterally on the side corresponding to the most severe symptoms. However, use of bilateral stimulation using two electrode arrays has also been investigated in patients with bilateral, severe symptoms. After implantation, noninvasive programming of the neurostimulator can be adjusted to the patient's symptoms. This feature may be important for patients with Parkinson disease (PD), whose disease may progress over time, requiring different neurostimulation parameters. Setting the optimal

neurostimulation parameters may involve the balance between optimal symptom control and appearance of adverse effects of neurostimulation, such as dysarthria, disequilibrium, or involuntary movements.

REGULATORY STATUS

In 1997, the Activa® Tremor Control System (Medtronic) was cleared for marketing by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for DBS. The Activa® Tremor Control System consists of an implantable neurostimulator, a deep brain stimulator lead, an extension that connects the lead to the power source, a console programmer, a software cartridge to set electrical parameters for stimulation, and a patient control magnet, which allows the patient to turn the neurostimulator on and off, or change between high and low settings.

The original FDA-labeled indications for Activa® were limited to unilateral implantation of the device for the treatment of tremor, but in 2002, the FDA-labeled indications were expanded to include bilateral implantation as a treatment to decrease the symptoms of advanced PD not controlled by medication. In 2003, the labeled indications were further expanded to include "...unilateral or bilateral stimulation of the internal globus pallidus or subthalamic nucleus to aid in the management of chronic, intractable (drug refractory) primary dystonia, including generalized and/or segmental dystonia, hemidystonia, and cervical dystonia (torticollis) in patients seven years of age or above." This latter indication was cleared for marketing by the FDA through the humanitarian device exemption process. In 2017, the indications for PD were modified to include "adjunctive therapy in reducing some of the symptoms in individuals with levodopa-responsive Parkinson's Disease of at least four years' duration that are not adequately controlled with medication."

In 2009, the Reclaim® device (Medtronic), a DBS device, was cleared for marketing by the FDA through the humanitarian device exemption process for the treatment of severe obsessive-compulsive disorder.

In 2014, the Brio Neurostimulation System (now called Infinity; St. Jude Medical Neuromodulation) was cleared for marketing by the FDA for the treatment of Parkinsonian tremor.

In 2016, the St. Jude Medical's Infinity DBS device with directional leads was approved by the FDA. The directional leads enable the clinician to "steer" current to different parts of the brain. This tailored treatment reduces side effects. The Infinity system can be linked to Apple's iPod Touch and iPad Mini.

In 2017, a second system with directional leads, the Vercise Deep Brain Stimulation System (Boston Scientific), was approved by the FDA. This system is to be used as an adjunctive therapy from reducing motor symptoms of moderate-to-advanced levodopa-responsive PD inadequately controlled with medication alone.

In 2018, the FDA approved the Medtronic DBS System for Epilepsy (Medtronic, Inc) through the Premarket Approval process. The pivotal study was the Stimulation of the Anterior Nucleus of the Thalamus for Epilepsy. The intended use is bilateral stimulation of the anterior nucleus of the thalamus as an adjunctive therapy for reducing the frequency of seizures in individuals 18 years of age or older diagnosed with epilepsy characterized by partial-onset seizures, with or without secondary generalization, that are refractory to three or more anti-epileptic medications.

FDA product code: MHY.

RELATED PROTOCOL

Vagus Nerve Stimulation

Services that are the subject of a clinical trial do not meet our Technology Assessment and Medically Necessary Services Protocol criteria and are considered investigational. *For explanation of experimental and investigational, please refer to the Technology Assessment and Medically Necessary Services Protocol.*

It is expected that only appropriate and medically necessary services will be rendered. We reserve the right to conduct prepayment and postpayment reviews to assess the medical appropriateness of the above-referenced procedures. **Some of this protocol may not pertain to the patients you provide care to, as it may relate to products that are not available in your geographic area.**

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We are not responsible for the continuing viability of web site addresses that may be listed in any references below.

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