

# Electroconvulsive Therapy

## Information for Physicians & Psychiatric Providers

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) is a procedure performed under general anesthesia in which small doses of electricity are applied to the scalp induce seizures to treat some psychiatric and medical illnesses. Common psychiatric indications include:

- severe major depressive episode, bipolar or unipolar
- suicidal ideation
- manic or mixed episodes
- catatonia

For coverage to be approved, insurance frequently requires patients to have failed or been intolerant of 2 or more medication trials or severe symptoms resulting in significant functional impairment.

### Program Requirements

Prior to referral, confirm the patient is able to meet the following requirements:

- Active involvement in outpatient psychiatric treatment
- Support person(s) who provide transportation and supervision for 8 hours following the procedure.

There are no absolute contraindications to ECT. Please consider the following when considering referral:

- ECT is less effective in the presence of comorbid personality disorder(s)
- Uncontrolled medical conditions may result in increased risk of complication from the procedure and anesthesia
- Active substance use complicates diagnosis and indication, and may impair treatment response
- Regular use of benzodiazepines limits response to treatment and may reduce treatment efficacy

### Referral Process & Consultation

Patients must be referred by their psychiatric provider, who is agreeing to continue providing primary outpatient psychiatric care for the duration of ECT treatment. The patient or their legal decision maker must consent to referral.

Psychiatric providers may initiate the referral process by submission of the following documents:

- Referral form, found on our website
- Insurance information via face sheet or copies of insurance card(s)
- Most recent psychiatric progress note
- Detailed clinical summary including diagnosis(-es), medical problems, current medications, past psychiatric treatments, and indication for ECT

All referrals undergo an initial review by the ECT team, and are submitted for insurance verification. If the patient is determined to be a possible candidate for treatment, they will be scheduled for consultation with the ECT psychiatrist.

### Referral Process & Consultation

During consultation, the ECT psychiatrist will review patient's current symptoms and treatment, as well as medical and psychiatric histories to determine if ECT is an appropriate treatment for the patient.

Prior to initiating treatment, the ECT psychiatrist may recommend additional tests or studies, or further medical evaluation for stabilization.

### Questions?

Call us at 907.212.4578 or scan the QR code to visit our website for more information

