



Behavioral Health Department

Alameda County Health

Memorandum

Date: July 13, 2026
To: Specialty Mental Health Services (SMHS) Outpatient Providers
From: Penny Bernhisel, LCSW, ACBHD Utilization Management Division Director *Penny Bernhisel, LCSW*
Subject: **NEW Interventional Psychiatry Referral and Authorization Requests**

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information on Interventional Psychiatry services, an overview of the prior treatment requirements, and instructions for how to make a referral.

Background

Interventional psychiatry involves the use of advanced brain stimulation procedures and specialized medical treatments to manage “treatment resistant” mental health conditions. Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT) has a long history within the mental health field. Policies and procedures to ensure that ECT providers meet the American Psychiatric Association’s review guidelines for administration in Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBHD) Mental Health Plan (MHP) beneficiaries date back to 2011.

NEW Interventional Psychiatry Referral and Authorization Process

Beginning July 1, 2025, ACBHD began offering a wider range of Interventional Psychiatry treatments beyond ECT, including: Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), Ketamine, and Esketamine/Sprovalo through specific contracted providers. This change aims to increase the accessibility of effective treatment for those individuals who have been unable to benefit from previous medication trials.

Referral and Authorization Requirements: TMS, Ketamine & Esketamine all require two failed complete six week trials of appropriate medications in two different classes. If there are “medication intolerances” included in the failed trials, then three trials are required. Trials must be verified by records or clinical documentation, or via provider statement.

Referral Process: Please follow the check list within the Interventional Psychiatry Request Form (<https://bhcsproviders.acgov.org/providers/UM/docs/interventional-psychiatry-referral-form.pdf>). The intention of this form is to guide providers on the minimum requirements for treatment eligibility. This is the first step in the referral process and not a guarantee for services. Once a referral is submitted to Bay Psychiatric Associates (BPA), they will reach out to schedule a time to complete an independent assessment before sending to ACBHD Utilization Management to review for authorization. A Treatment Summary and Most Recent Progress notes may be provided in lieu of this form so long as the requirements are met.

Actions Required

Send referrals to: Florence Yuen, Interventional Psychiatry Administrative Supervisor at Florence@baypsychiatric.com Please share this information with your teams, as appropriate.

Questions and Support

If you have any further questions please contact Alameda County Utilization Management (510) 567-8141 or UM@acgov.org.