

Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation

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What's this project about?

In Alberta, more than 120,000 people suffer from Major Depressive Disorder including over 20,000 seniors, and 2,000 new mothers. Treatment Resistant Depression (TRD) is usually defined as a failure to respond to two appropriate trials of first-line interventions, which can include medication or psychological treatments. Between 30-60% of people with Major Depressive Disorder will not respond to first line treatment.

Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) uses a magnetic field to change electrical activity on the surface of the brain. By repeating this over time, the function of the targeted area can improve, which can reduce the symptoms of depression.

More than 30 randomized clinical trials have demonstrated the benefit of rTMS . rTMS is not a replacement for existing therapies but will provide an additional method to treat TRD. In Alberta, approximately 36-72,000 Albertans may be eligible for rTMS. Currently, the clinic at the Centennial Centre in Ponoka is the only AHS program that offers rTMS.

Where are we now?

A vendor has been selected to provide rTMS machines for services across the province. The Provincial rTMS Implementation Working Group, led by the AMH SCN™, has been formed to provide central oversight and coordination as services are launched.

While all Zones are interested in launching rTMS programs, funding to acquire the machines has not been secured in all regions. Philanthropy investment in Calgary and Edmonton will support limited implementation in the near term. Both cities anticipate the launch of rTMS in late 2018.

For more information, please contact the Addiction and Mental Health SCN™: addictionmentalhealth.scn@ahs.ca

