

*Department of Health
Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission*

Advisory Opinion

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC) issues this advisory opinion in accordance with WAC 246-840-800. An advisory opinion adopted by the NCQAC is an official opinion about safe nursing practice. The opinion is not legally binding and does not have the force and effect of a duly promulgated regulation or a declaratory ruling by the NCQAC. Institutional policies may restrict practice further in their setting and/or require additional expectations to assure the safety of their patient and/or decrease risk.

<i>Title:</i>	Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner Scope of Practice: Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS)	<i>Number:</i> NCAO 18.00
<i>References:</i>	RCW 18.79 Nursing Care WAC 246-840 Practical and Registered Nursing Nursing Scope of Practice Decision Tree	
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<i>Effective Date:</i>	July 12, 2019	
<i>Supersedes:</i>	Not Applicable	
<i>Approved By:</i>	Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission	

Conclusion Statement

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (NCQAC) concludes that it is within the scope of practice of the advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP) to treat patients independently without supervision or oversight from a physician, using repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) following successful completion of the criteria in the [Scope of Practice Decision Tree](#).

Background and Analysis

The boundaries of the scope of nursing practice must be flexible to be responsive to the evolving health-related needs of the public. Nursing practice takes place in the context of continuing change and development resulting from advances in research and technology, the introduction of new approaches to delivery of care, and a greater variety of practitioners sharing more areas of common ability. The dynamic nature of the health care environment requires that a nurse respond to patient needs by continually expanding knowledge and skills and making judgments about the limits of their practice. The overall scope of nursing practice refers to the outer limits or boundaries for the profession and everything therein. The actual scope of practice of individual nurses is always narrower than that of the scope of the nursing profession as a whole.

Nursing practice includes activities an ARNP are educated to perform, as established through laws and regulations, definitions of nursing practice and complemented by standards, guidelines,

and position statements issued by professional organizations and the NCQAC. Application of the steps of the [Nursing Scope of Practice Decision Tree](#) helps determine if a procedure is within the scope of practice of the ARNPs.

The first three criteria in the [Nursing Scope of Practice Decision Tree](#) are met for this procedure. First, the procedure is not prohibited by Washington State nursing laws and rules/regulations or any other applicable laws, rules/regulations, or accreditation standards or professional nursing scope of practice standard. Second, the attached systematic review indicates strong evidence the treatment is effective and safe. Third, the procedure is safely provided to individuals across the state by ARNPs. There are five more criteria met including individual responsibilities of the professional ARNP such as education and competency of the nurse.

The procedure rTMS is an effective treatment for recurrent severe depression. Six major insurance companies approve reimbursement of rTMS provided by ARNPs. Four major insurance companies do not approve reimbursement for ARNPs.

High quality evidence exists supporting the clinical efficacy of rTMS in patients who have failed ≤ 1 medication therapies. This evidence also appears to be in line with remission and response rates of patients who have undergone additional medication trials after one failed medication trial. High quality evidence also exists that rTMS used solely or in combination with antidepressants for first-episode major depressive disorder may be more effective than antidepressants alone (Voigt 2019).

Conclusion

The NCQAC encourages nurses to practice to their full extent within the legal framework and individual scope of practice. The practice of nursing is constantly evolving as new and changing technology and therapies are introduced. Nursing practice is not defined by a specific activity or task list but rather a process consisting of a legally defined set of components of practice. The [Nursing Scope of Practice Decision Tree](#) is the primary tool for a nurse to determine if an activity is within the nurse's scope of practice. Repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) is within the scope of practice of the ARNP.

References

Consensus Recommendations for the Clinical Application of Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) in the Treatment of Depression:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5846193/>.

National Council State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN): Scope of Nursing Practice Decision-Making Framework, *Journal of Nursing Regulation*, Volume 7, Issue 3, October 2016.

Voigt J, Carpenter L, and Leuchter A. (2019) A systematic literature review of the clinical efficacy of repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation (rTMS) in non-treatment resistant patients with major depressive disorder. *BMC Psychiatry* 19:13:

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-018-1989-z>.