

# network

## RAPID UPDATE

April 21, 2006

### **Reminder: Vagus Nerve Stimulation Is Not Covered for Treatment of Depression**

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio reminds you that vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) is not a covered service for the treatment of depression. VNS is only considered medical necessary in patients with medically and surgically refractory seizures, as evidenced by:

- Failure of more than one trial of single or combination anti-epileptic medications, as evidenced by persistent seizures or intolerable side effects of drug therapy; AND
- Patients have failed, or are not candidates for resective epilepsy surgery.

All other applications of vagus nerve stimulation (VNS) are considered investigational/not medically necessary, including but not limited to, seizures that do not meet the above criteria or as a treatment of depression per the SURG.0007 Medical Policy.

To access the complete policy, please click [HERE](#).

Please keep in mind when notifying Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield of a surgery request, it is important to provide all pertinent information. Anthem will continue to monitor professional and facility claims for activity related to vagus nerve stimulation to apply the medical policy as appropriate.

If you have any questions, please contact your local Network Management Representative or Provider Inquiry.