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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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COVID Vaccine is Essential for Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Clinicians and Staff

Fresno, CA. December 23, 2020 – Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) therapy is an FDA-cleared treatment for Major Depressive Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and smoking cessation. TMS is administered typically in a community-based, outpatient clinic. Administration of TMS requires placement of an electromagnetic coil onto the scalp of a patient. Due to the mechanism of treatment delivery, TMS must be administered by physicians and technicians in face-to-face visits, necessitating direct exposure to patients without alternatives for remote delivery.

During the pandemic, TMS clinics have remained open to provide on-going TMS care. This is an essential medical service. Depression afflicts 7% of the population, and the number of individuals struggling with depression has increased 30% as a result of the pandemic. Depression is linked to higher rates of hospitalization and more emergency room visits. Patients with untreated or insufficiently treated depression have higher rates of suicide and are more likely to have weakened immune systems. In addition, study by Wang et al found patients with a mental disorder and COVID-19 infection had a hospitalization rate of 27.4% and death rate of 8.5%. This is much higher than individuals without mental illness, who had a hospitalization rate of 18.6% and death rate of 4.7%. Ensuring depressed patients can access TMS treatment centers serves the public good and saves lives.

The Clinical TMS Society recommends those who provide TMS, both physicians and technicians, receive COVID vaccinations in the same phases as other physicians and healthcare workers providing essential direct patient care. This will help ensure TMS clinics remain open as an essential medical treatment that improves individual well-being, reduces consequences of untreated severe mental illness, and avoids hospital based medical utilization.

Wang Q, Xu R, Volkow N. Increased risk of COVID-19 infection and mortality in people with mental disorders: analysis from electronic health records in the United States. World Psychiatry October 7, 2020.

The Clinical TMS Society was established in 2013 and includes Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) providers with extensive clinical and research experience from across the United States and the world. The society is dedicated to optimizing clinical practice, awareness, and accessibility of Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation Therapy. For more information on the Clinical TMS Society please call (845) 392.3238 or visit clinicaltmssociety.org.

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