



FOR VA HOSPITALS, CBOCS & CLINICS

INTRODUCING SPARROW ASCENT

A drug-free, wearable neurostimulation platform for opioid withdrawal recovery

Sparrow Ascent is FDA-cleared and was studied in RESTORE, a NIDA-funded, double-blind, randomized, sham-controlled, multi-site trial. It works as an adjunct to the medication VA teams already prescribe — nothing to schedule, nothing to divert.

Sparrow Ascent™

Transcutaneous auricular neurostimulation (tAN®)
FDA-cleared for opioid withdrawal

Identifying the withdrawal gap in veteran OUD care

Veterans face roughly twice the OUD overdose mortality of the general population, and withdrawal symptoms interfere with engagement at the exact moment care begins.¹ Anxiety and discomfort reduce willingness to start treatment, the first days after induction are the hardest, and the risk of leaving against medical advice is real.

Symptom management beyond medication is limited, and few tools continue supporting recovery once the veteran leaves the clinic. The gap isn't the treatment pathway. It's everything that makes a veteran able to stay in it.

2×

Veteran OUD overdose mortality is **2× higher** than the general population¹

30–50%

of veterans in SUD treatment carry **co-occurring PTSD**²

There's a new and effective option for OUD treatment

Sparrow Ascent is an FDA-cleared, drug-free wearable that uses transcutaneous auricular neurostimulation (tAN®) to reduce opioid withdrawal symptoms, with no medication, from induction through long-term maintenance.³

In RESTORE — a NIDA-funded, double-blind, randomized, sham-controlled, multi-site trial — Ascent worked as an adjunct to medication:⁴

TREATMENT RETENTION

6.9×

greater odds of staying in treatment beyond 20 days with stimulation through both phases of care.*

ACUTE DETOX

3.1×

greater odds of completing acute detox on stimulation plus lofexidine than sham plus placebo.

RELAPSE

18%

reduction in relapse during post-acute treatment versus extended-release naltrexone alone.



Handheld controller and single-use ear electrode array. Used in clinic and at home.

How it works Mechanism of action

- 1 Delivers patient-controlled electrical stimulation transcutaneously, through the skin on and around the ear.
- 2 Targets cranial nerve branches of the trigeminal and vagus nerves, increasing parasympathetic tone to counter-act hyper fight-or-flight.
- 3 Activates central brain regions to release endogenous opioids (endorphins) that fill the vacant opioid receptors.

Why it helps VA teams Fit to veteran OUD care



Drug-free by design

No medication, no DEA scheduling, no diversion risk. Fits VA formulary and Whole Health pathways.



Eases the hardest days

Supports veterans through the highest-discomfort stabilization window, when withdrawal derails engagement.



Works in any setting

Portable and simple to use across ED, inpatient, outpatient, and at home.



Supports retention

Helps keep veterans engaged through early recovery and after discharge.

A drug-free tool that fits the care VA already delivers

VHA Directive 1160.04

Veterans who would benefit from medication for OUD must be offered treatment, and OUD care cannot be limited to specialty settings. Ascent supports induction wherever the veteran presents.

Opioid Safety Initiative

A 67% drop in veterans receiving opioid prescriptions from 2012 to 2023.⁵ Ascent adds relief without adding a medication.

VA/DoD opioid CPG (2022)

Calls for individualized, clinically appropriate tapering rather than rapid discontinuation. Ascent eases the discomfort that stalls a taper.

PROCUREMENT

Already on contract.

On a **VA Federal Supply Schedule (FSS)** contract and listed on **DLA ECAT**. Order through your existing channels — no open market purchase, no new solicitation. CMS HCPCS codes are already in place.

Learn how Sparrow Ascent can help you and your patients.

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References Figures cited inside

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- 2 Teeters JB, Lancaster CL, Brown DG, Back SE. Substance use disorders in military veterans: prevalence and treatment challenges. *Subst Abuse Rehabil*. 2017 Aug 30;8:69–77. doi: 10.2147/SAR.S116720. PMID: 28919834; PMCID: PMC5587184.
- 3 Tirado CF, Washburn SN, Covalin A, Hedenberg C, Vanderpool H, Benner C, Powell DP, McWade MA, Khodaparast N. Delivering transcutaneous auricular neurostimulation (tAN) to improve symptoms associated with opioid withdrawal: results from a prospective clinical trial. *Bioelectron Med*. 2022 Aug 18;8(1):12. doi: 10.1186/s42234-022-00095-x. PMID: 35978394; PMCID: PMC9385243.
- 4 DeRoo A, et al. Transcutaneous Auricular Neurostimulation as an Adjunct to Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (RESTORE). *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. 2026. Under review.
- 5 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Opioid Safety Initiative reporting, 2012–2023.

Sparrow Ascent™ is FDA-cleared for use as an aid to reduce the symptoms of opioid withdrawal. Sparrow™, tAN®, and Spark Biomedical® are marks of Spark Biomedical, Inc. Refer to labeling for indications, contraindications, warnings, and instructions for use.