MGMTDIGITAL

2026 BENCHMARK REPORT

2026 Behavioral Health Google Ads Benchmark Report

Google Ads cost, conversion and seasonality benchmarks for addiction treatment and mental health providers, based on $6.86 million in 2026 ad spend across 50 accounts.

November 2026 | Prepared by MGMT Digital

OVERVIEW

Key findings at a glance

Behavioral health advertisers paid an average of **$7.15 per click** and **$116 per conversion (calls and form fills)** on Google Ads from January through September 2026, based on $6.86 million in spend across 50 treatment provider accounts managed by MGMT Digital.

$7.15
average Google Ads cost per click for behavioral health providers in 2026, across all campaign types

$116
average cost per conversion (calls and form fills)

$15.33
average CPC for detox keywords. Residential ($15.41), PHP ($15.51) and IOP ($15.22) cost almost exactly the same

2.5x
for the typical provider, non-brand clicks cost 2.5 times as much as clicks on their own brand name

4.5% vs. 2.93%
mobile clicks convert at about 1.5 times the rate of desktop clicks

1.6x
ad headlines about insurance and cost convert at 1.6 times the rate of standard level-of-care headlines (5.50% vs. 3.41%)

+80%
cost per click on the same accounts rose 80% in two years ($5.98 to $10.77) as AI Overviews spread, while paid search CTR held steady

17-20% more
conversions in August and September than in an average month. Search demand for treatment is 21-28% lower in November and December.

ABOUT THE DATA

About the data: $6.86M in behavioral health Google Ads spend

This report draws on first-party Google Ads data from 50 addiction treatment and mental health provider accounts, January 1 to September 30, 2026. All figures are anonymized and aggregated.

Metric	Value (Jan–Sep 2026)
Accounts included	50
Google Ads spend analyzed	$6.86M
Impressions	23.5M
Clicks	959,789
Average click-through rate (CTR)	4.09%
Average cost per click (CPC)	$7.15
Conversions (calls and form fills)	59,154

Metric	Value (Jan–Sep 2026)
Average cost per conversion	$116

Conversions are phone calls and form fills as tracked in Google Ads, not admissions. Some accounts record more than one conversion per call (for example, separate actions for longer calls), so $116 is a cost per conversion, not a cost per lead.

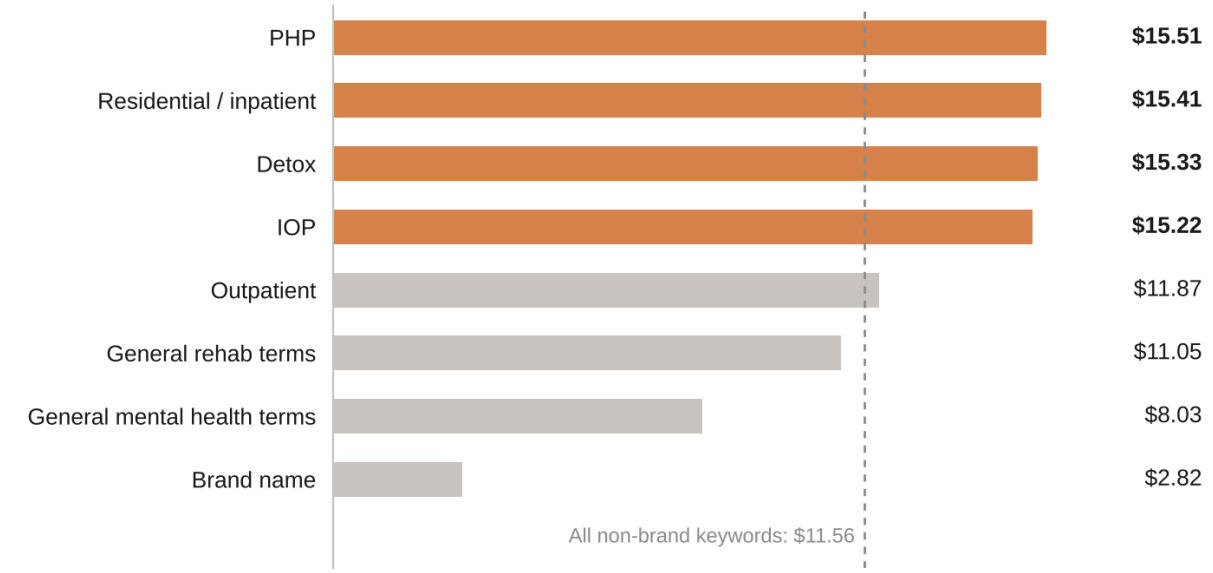
COST PER CLICK

Average Google Ads CPC for addiction and mental health treatment in 2026

High-intent keywords cost about **$15 per click** no matter the level of care: detox ($15.33), residential ($15.41), PHP ($15.51) and IOP ($15.22) are within 30 cents of each other.

Detox, residential, PHP and IOP keywords all cost about $15 per click

Average Google Ads cost per click by treatment type, Search keywords, Jan to Sep 2026



Source: MGMT Digital Google Ads data. Search keywords, 47 accounts, Jan 1 to Sep 30, 2026. Average CPC = total spend ÷ total clicks.

Addiction treatment keywords cost more than mental health keywords: **$12.54** vs. **$9.09** per click across all non-brand searches. Broad terms such as "rehab near me" or "mental health treatment" cost less than searches that name a level of care, and a provider's own brand name is the cheapest click of all.

These are Search keyword averages. The $7.15 headline CPC is lower because it also includes brand searches and lower-cost campaign types such as Performance Max.

BRAND VS. NON-BRAND

Brand vs. non-brand Google Ads performance for treatment centers

For the typical provider, a non-brand click costs **2.5 times** as much as a click on its own brand name. Brand clicks also earn about five times the click-through rate and convert at 10.8%, compared with 3.8% for non-brand.

Typical provider (median of 38 clients)	Brand keywords	Non-brand keywords
Cost per click	$3.31	$10.11
Click-through rate	30.5%	6.0%
Share of keyword spend	about 4%	about 96%

Typical provider (median of 32 clients)	Brand campaigns	Non-brand campaigns
Conversion rate (calls and form fills)	10.8%	3.8%
Cost per conversion	$44	$261
Share of conversions	about 21%	about 79%

Every one of the 32 providers got cheaper conversions from brand than from non-brand. For the typical provider, a non-brand conversion cost about 5.4 times as much, and brand campaigns delivered about a fifth of all conversions on under 4% of spend.

Brand campaigns are cheap insurance: they keep competitors from capturing people who are already searching for your facility by name. Many of those searchers would have found the facility anyway, so brand results overstate what paid search adds on its own. But most of the budget, and most of the new patient demand, sits in non-brand search, where people look for a level of care, a condition or a location. That is where a provider's results are won or lost.

DEVICES

Mobile vs. desktop conversion rates for behavioral health ads

Mobile clicks convert at **4.5%**, compared with **2.93%** on desktop: about 1.5 times the rate.

People looking for treatment often act in the moment, and a phone puts the call button one tap away. For most providers, that makes mobile call experience (click-to-call ads, a visible phone number, a fast-loading page and a staffed line) one of the highest-impact parts of a paid search program.

AD COPY

Top-converting Google Ads headline themes for rehab and mental health providers

Headlines about insurance and cost convert best: **5.50%**, about **1.6 times** the rate of standard level-of-care headlines (3.41%), at the lowest cost per conversion of any major theme (**$192**).

Headline theme	Example	Accounts	CTR	Conv. rate	Cost per conv.
Insurance & cost	"Most Insurance Accepted"	16	4.83%	5.50%	$192
Social proof & rankings	"Best Rehab Center - Newsweek"	18	3.42%	4.69%	$252
Luxury & privacy	"Private Rooms & 24/7 Care"	11	4.09%	3.98%	$297
Brand name	Facility name	35	3.85%	3.46%	$267
Level of care / condition	"Inpatient Mental Health Care"	40	3.95%	3.41%	$253
Location	"Rehab Center in [City]"	23	3.75%	2.44%	$373
Speed & access	"Same Day Admissions"	15	3.65%	2.16%	$250
Empathy & emotion	"You're Not Alone Here"	8	2.56%	1.05%	$529

- **Answer "can I afford this?" first.** Insurance and cost headlines lead on both click-through rate (4.83%) and conversion rate (5.50%).
- **Third-party proof is the next strongest lever.** Rankings and recognition ("#1 Rated," "Newsweek") convert at 4.69%.
- **Empathy-led headlines underperform.** Emotional lines like "You're Not Alone Here" had the lowest click-through rate (2.56%) and conversion rate (1.05%), at $529 per conversion: about 2.8 times the cost of the insurance theme. People searching for treatment respond to concrete answers more than reassurance.
- **Location alone is not enough.** Geo-only headlines convert at 2.44% and cost $373 per conversion.

Based on 762 responsive search ad headlines with at least 200 impressions in 2026, across 44 accounts, each grouped into a theme by its message. Responsive search ads show several headlines at once, so these results compare themes directionally rather than isolating any single headline.

AI OVERVIEWS

How AI Overviews affected paid search CTR and CPC

Paid search held its ground as AI Overviews spread across Google, but the price of a click nearly doubled. On the same 12 accounts, cost per click rose **80% in two years**, from $5.98 to $10.77, while click-through rate did not fall.

Search campaigns, Jan–Sep (same 12 accounts)	2024	2025	2026
Paid search CTR	4.22%	5.16%	5.13%

Search campaigns, Jan–Sep (same 12 accounts)	2024	2025	2026
Average CPC	$5.98	$7.31	**$10.77**
Conversion rate	5.86%	4.38%	6.10%

- **CTR held up.** Click-through rate on paid search ads rose from 4.22% in 2024 to about 5.1% in 2025 and 2026.
- **Cost is the real change.** Advertisers now pay far more for the same click.
- **Conversion rate recovered in 2026.** At 6.10%, it was the highest of the three years, which helps offset higher click costs for well-managed accounts.

Google Ads does not report when an ad appears alongside an AI Overview, so no direct measure exists. This comparison tracks the same accounts in the same months before and after AI Overviews rolled out. These figures cover Search campaigns only, so they differ from the all-campaign averages above.

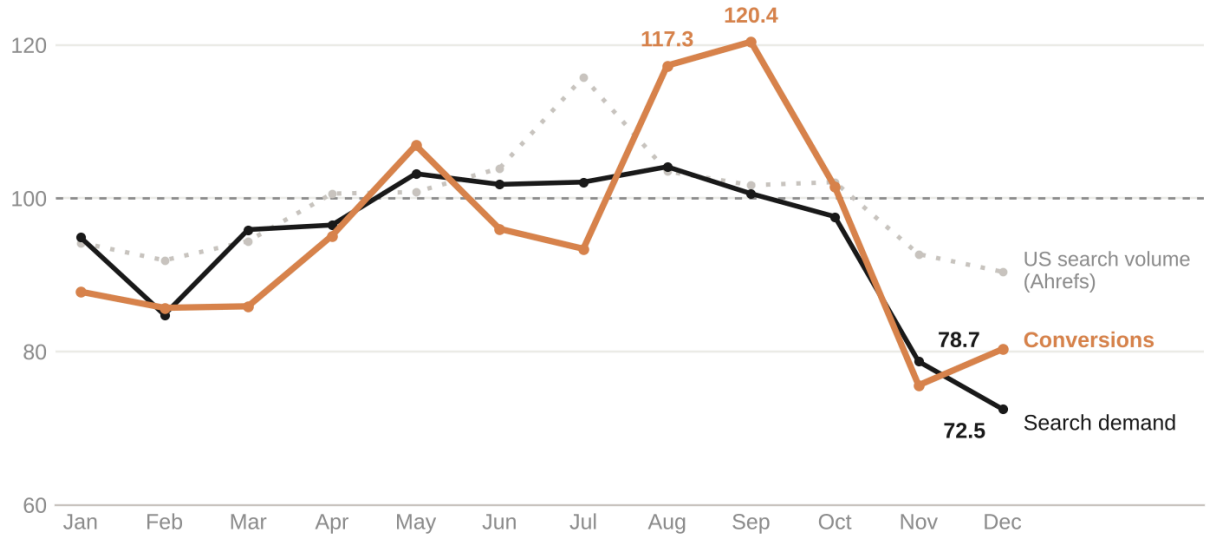
SEASONALITY

Seasonal demand trends for addiction and mental health treatment searches

The holiday slump is the strongest seasonal signal: search demand for treatment runs **21–28% below average** in November and December, while August and September bring **17–20% more conversions** than an average month.

Demand drops 21 to 28% in Nov and Dec; conversions peak in Aug and Sep

Monthly index, 100 = a provider's average month (median across providers, 2024 to 2025)



Source: MGMT Digital Google Ads data, Search campaigns, 23 providers with 12 full months in 2024 or 2025. US search volume: Ahrefs estimates for six core treatment terms.

- **The holidays are the costliest time to generate calls.** In November and December, only 20–30% of providers see demand above their own average. Conversions fall 20–24%, and CPCs come in slightly above average.

- **August and September are the conversion peak.** Conversions run 17–20% above average while clicks are only about 2–4% above, so conversion rate rises, not just volume. Cost per conversion hits its yearly low.
- **January is not the "New Year's resolution" spike people expect.** Conversion rate is the lowest of the year (22% below average), and conversions are 12% below.
- **CPCs barely move with the seasons,** staying within about ±7% all year. Seasonal swings in cost per conversion come mostly from conversion rate, not click prices.
- **National search volume backs this up.** US search estimates for terms like "rehab near me" and "detox near me" also show a summer high and a November–February low.

Demand is estimated as impressions divided by search impression share, so budget limits don't look like drops in demand.

TAKEAWAYS

What this means for treatment centers in 2027

Click prices on the same accounts rose 80% in two years, so the providers who win are the ones who turn more of each click into a call.

1. **Budget for $15 clicks on high-intent keywords.** Detox, residential, PHP and IOP searches all cost about the same, so plan by level of care demand, not by assumed price differences.
2. **Lead with insurance and cost.** Headlines that answer affordability convert at 1.6 times the rate of standard headlines.
3. **Build for mobile calls.** Mobile converts at about 1.5 times the desktop rate, so call buttons, call tracking and staffed phone lines matter as much as the ads.
4. **Protect your brand, then invest in non-brand.** Brand clicks are 2.5 times cheaper, but new patient demand lives in non-brand search.
5. **Plan around the calendar.** Expect softer demand in November and December, and be ready to capture the late-summer conversion peak.

> **MGMT Digital manages Google Ads for addiction treatment and mental health providers. To see how your account compares with these benchmarks, contact MGMT Digital.**

METHODOLOGY

Methodology

This report analyzes anonymized, aggregated Google Ads data from 50 behavioral health client accounts managed by MGMT Digital between January 1 and September 30, 2026, representing $6.86 million in ad spend and 959,789 clicks. Accounts were included if they ran for at least three months during that period, and only months under MGMT Digital management were counted. Year-over-year comparisons use a fixed set of 12 accounts active in every month from January through September of 2024, 2025 and 2026. Conversions include phone calls and form submissions as tracked in Google Ads.

Section	Data used
Headline numbers	All campaign types, 50 accounts, Jan–Sep 2026
CPC by treatment type	Search keywords from 47 accounts, Jan–Sep 2026, each keyword grouped by the level of care and service it names; average CPC = total spend ÷ total clicks

Section	Data used
Brand vs. non-brand	Search keywords, median of 38 accounts with at least 30 clicks in both groups (CPC, CTR); Search campaigns named as brand vs. all others, median of 32 accounts with at least 30 clicks and 5 conversions in both (conversion rate, cost per conversion)
Ad copy themes	762 responsive search ad headlines with at least 200 impressions, 44 accounts
AI Overviews	Search campaigns, the same 12 accounts, Jan–Sep of 2024, 2025 and 2026
Seasonality	Search campaigns, 23 accounts with all 12 months of data in 2024 or 2025; demand = impressions ÷ search impression share

Seasonality also draws on Ahrefs US search volume estimates for six core treatment terms as an independent check.