

B.14: Gender-affirming surgery

Unit: Registration and Claims	Effective date: January 5, 2023
Branch: Insured Health Services	Last updated: January 5, 2023
Policy number: B.14	Review date: January 4, 2025

Purpose

This policy describes which gender-affirming surgeries are eligible for coverage as an insured service; the application requirements for gender-affirming surgery; and the criteria used to determine who is eligible for gender-affirming surgery.

Policy

1. No applications or pre-approvals are required for gender-affirming surgery consultations.
2. No applications or pre-approvals are required for gender-affirming surgery that is provided in a public health care facility in Yukon (for example, hysterectomy with bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy and orchiectomy).

Application requirements

3. The health care practitioner must submit an application package on behalf of the client to Insured Health Services in advance of the client's surgery.
4. Application packages must include a:
 - o surgical readiness assessment, written by a qualified assessor; and
 - o letter from a health care practitioner that requests coverage for gender-affirming surgery on behalf of the client.
5. The surgical readiness assessment must be done in accordance with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care by a qualified assessor and confirm:
 - o fulfillment of the diagnostic criteria for gender incongruence;
 - o the client's experience of gender incongruence is marked and sustained;
 - o other possible causes of apparent gender incongruence have been identified and excluded;
 - o mental health conditions (if any) that could negatively impact the outcome of gender-affirming surgery have been assessed, with risks and benefits discussed;
 - o physical health conditions (if any) that could negatively impact the outcome of gender-affirming surgery have been assessed, with risks and benefits discussed;
 - o the client has the capacity to make a fully informed decision and to consent for treatment; and

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- the client has been informed of the reproductive effects, including the potential loss of fertility and the available options to preserve fertility.
6. In addition to the information listed in policy statement six (6), if the request is for a client under the age of 18 years old, the surgical readiness assessment must confirm:
- the client possesses the emotional and cognitive maturity required to provide informed consent/assent for the treatment;
 - mental health conditions (if any) that may interfere with diagnostic clarity, capacity to consent and gender-affirming medical treatments have been addressed; sufficiently so that gender-affirming surgery can be provided optimally;
 - the client has been informed of the reproductive effects, including the potential loss of fertility and the available options to preserve fertility;
 - the client has received at least 12 months of gender-affirming hormone therapy or longer, if required, to achieve the desired surgical result for gender-affirming procedures, including breast augmentation, orchiectomy, vaginoplasty, hysterectomy, phalloplasty, metoidioplasty and facial surgery as part of gender-affirming treatment unless hormone therapy is either not desired or is medically contraindicated.
7. If the request is for more than one type of surgery where the surgeries are directly related to one another and the surgeries will be performed by the same surgeon, only one application package is required.
8. If the request is for more than one type of surgery and the surgeries are not directly related to one another or the surgeries will not be provided by the same surgeon, separate application packages are required.
9. Application packages must be complete in order to be processed.

Eligibility requirements

10. Only insured persons are eligible for gender-affirming surgery coverage.
11. The medical advisor and/or manager determine eligibility for gender-affirming surgery coverage.
12. When determining eligibility for gender-affirming surgery, the medical advisor and/or manager will consider whether the application package confirms the client meets the criteria outlined in the surgical readiness assessment,;

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- if the client is 18 years of age or older, this includes criteria listed in policy statement six (6); or
- if the client is under 18 years of age, this includes criteria listed in policy statement six (6) and seven (7).

13. The medical advisor and/or manager must review application packages and consider requests for gender-affirming surgery coverage within 10 business days from the date Insured Health Services received the application package.

14. Clients approved for lower body surgery may also be eligible for gender-affirming hair removal by virtue of their lower body surgery coverage approval. Refer to policy B.13 for more information.

Surgery location

15. Gender-affirming surgery will be covered in a hybrid of private and public health care facilities in Canada.

16. The location where gender-affirming surgery is provided will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will depend on the nature and extent of the care and the availability of medical expertise.

- Refer to Appendix A for a list of current gender-affirming surgery locations.

Coverage amounts

17. Insured Health Services must approve all requests for gender-affirming surgery coverage in advance of the surgery.

- Insured Health Services will not pay for, cover or reimburse any costs associated with clients receiving gender-affirming surgery prior to receiving approval from Insured Health Services, unless otherwise specified in this policy.

18. In exceptional circumstances, the Director may consider approving gender-affirming surgery coverage after the surgery, provided the client meets all application and eligibility criteria for the surgery.

19. Insured Health Services will cover the cost of:

- consultation for surgery (for more information, see policy statement two (2))
- surgery; and
- medication and meals while an inpatient at the facility in which the surgery was performed.

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20. Eligible clients who are approved for gender-affirming surgery in a location that is outside of the Yukon will be provided with a medical travel subsidy in accordance with the *Travel for Medical Treatment Act*, the *Travel for Medical Treatment Regulations*, and Insured Health Services' Medical Travel policies.

21. The health care practitioner who submitted the application package can submit written appeals on behalf of the client addressed to the Director. A written appeal must include:

- the client's Personal Health Number;
- the client's application package;
- a detailed explanation of the decision that is being appealed.

Definitions

Director: The Director of the Yukon Health Care Insurance Plan, as appointed in accordance with section 4(1) of the *Health Care Insurance Plan Act*.

Gender-affirming: Refers to being recognized or affirmed in a person's gender identity. It is usually conceptualized as having social, psychological, medical and legal dimensions.

Gender-affirming surgery: Includes body contouring, facial surgery, upper body surgeries (for example, breast construction or augmentation, chest construction, and revision), lower body surgeries (for example, orchiectomy, hysterectomy with bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy, vaginoplasty, vulvoplasty, erectile tissue release, metoidioplasty and phalloplasty) and voice feminizing surgery.

Gender incongruence: Is a diagnostic term used in the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision that describes a person's marked and persistent experience of an incompatibility between that person's gender identity and the gender expected of them based on their birth-assigned sex.

Gender identity: Refers to a person's deeply felt, internal, intrinsic sense of their own gender.

Health care practitioner: a person lawfully entitled to provide health services in the Yukon.

Inpatient: A person who stays in a hospital while under treatment.

Insured person: In accordance with section 4(1) of the *Regulations Respecting Health Care Insurance Services*, an insured person is an individual who, on the beginning of their third month of residency in the Yukon, becomes eligible for insured services. For the purpose of this policy, this term also includes "client".

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Insured service: Those physician services, surgical-dental services, and other health services, including the supply of drugs, medical and dental supplies, prostheses, orthotics, appliances and similar devices, as may be prescribed, that are provided to insured persons, but does not include any service that a person is entitled to or eligible for under any other Act, under any law of a province that relates to workers' compensation or under any Acts of the Parliament of Canada other than the federal Act.

Manager: The manager of Insured Health Services' Registration and Claims unit.

Medical advisor: A physician contracted by Insured Health Services to provide subject matter expertise, advice and recommendations regarding requests submitted to Insured Health Services.

Qualified assessor: A health care practitioner who is licensed by their statutory body and holds, at a minimum, a master's degree or equivalent training in a clinical field relevant to this role and granted by a nationally accredited statutory institution.

Service provider: A health care practitioner who provides health care services.


World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH): is a non-profit, interdisciplinary professional and educational organization devoted to transgender health.

Authorities

- [Canada Health Act](#)
- [Health Act](#)
- [Health Care Insurance Plan Act](#), s.1, 4(1)
- [Regulations Respecting Health Care Insurance Services](#), ss.3(i), 3(m), 4(1)

Related policies and other documents

- B.13: Gender-affirming voice and communication training and gender affirming hair removal
- [World Professional Association for Transgender Health \(WPATH\) Standards of Care for the Health of Transgender and Gender Diverse People](#)

APPROVED BY:		Director, Insured Health Services
DATE:	January 5, 2023	

Appendix A

Unit: Registration and Claims	Effective date:
Branch: Insured Health Services	Last updated:
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Appendix A

Outlined below is a list of locations in which gender-affirming surgeries are performed. Inclusion in the list below does not mean that Insured Health Services recommends or promotes use of that private health care facility.

	Yukon	Alberta	British Columbia	Quebec
Breast construction or augmentation			X	
Chest construction			X	
Hysterectomy with bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy	X			
Metoidioplasty			X	X
Orchiectomy	X	X	X	X
Penectomy				X
Phalloplasty			X	X
Vaginoplasty			X	X