

The information contained on this page is generalized and does not constitute medical or legal advice. It is recommended that all patients have pre-operative consultations with their surgeons and medical care providers to receive individualized information.

Transition-Related Surgeries (TRS)

Transition-related surgeries change sex characteristics to affirm a person's gender identity. In Newfoundland and Labrador, transition-related surgery is eligible for coverage under the Medical Care Plan (MCP) when it is listed below (see "What's Covered") and prior approval is obtained. The TRS Request for Prior Approval is available at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/TRS-Request-for-Prior-Approval.pdf>.

The request is only applicable if:

- the purpose of the proposed procedure is to change sex characteristics in order to affirm gender identity; and
- the proposed TRS procedure is on the list below (see "What's Covered").

Requests for surgical revisions should not be made using the TRS Request for Prior Approval. Requests for surgical revisions are adjudicated based on the opinion of the attending physician along with criteria established in Section 3 of the General Preamble of the Medical Care Plan Medical Payment Schedule.

Criteria for eligibility for TRS are based on guidelines published by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) in the **Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming People** Version 7 (2012).

Effective November 4, 2019, health care providers in Newfoundland and Labrador who meet WPATH credentials will be able to provide Newfoundland and Labrador patients with surgical readiness assessments. Physicians and nurse practitioners throughout the province, with or without WPATH credentials, will be able to request TRS prior approval for funding using these surgical readiness assessment(s). The Department of Health and Community Services will continue to accept surgical readiness assessments from The Adult Gender Identity Clinic, The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, Ontario.

Once approved, the TRS Request for Prior Approval along with the approval letter from MCP and a referral letter from the referring physician/nurse practitioner should be forwarded to the surgeon accepting the patient for care. Alternatively, the attending surgeon can submit the TRS Request for Prior Approval. Even when prior approval is obtained from MCP, it does not mean that the indicated surgeon on the Request for Prior Approval will accept the patient for care and/or perform the proposed procedure. WPATH suggests that when qualified health professionals perform surgical readiness

assessments, the decision to perform a TRS procedure is shared by surgeons, surgical readiness assessors, as well as the patient.

What's Covered

The insured TRS services below are funded by the province's provincial health insurance plans when a TRS Request for Prior Approval document is completed and approved before the procedure takes place.

Breast / Chest Surgery:

- Breast augmentation when there is breast aplasia (no breast development) after 12 continuous months of hormone therapy
- Mastectomy with chest masculinization (excluding implants and liposuction, which are not covered)

Genital Surgery:

- Hysterectomy
- Orchiectomy
- Salpingo-oophorectomy

Genital Reconstruction:

- Vaginoplasty (includes orchiectomy, penectomy, labiaplasty, clitoroplasty; with or without construction of the vaginal cavity)
- Metoidioplasty
- Phalloplasty (includes urethroplasty, scrotoplasty, vaginectomy, and insertion of testicular and approved penile implants)

Depending on the requirements of each individual patient, some of the above-listed procedures may be performed alone or in combination with each other.

Out of Province Coverage

When TRS procedures are unavailable in the province, insured TRS services can be funded by the province's provincial health insurance plans when prior approval is obtained and the services are provided in a publicly funded facility within Canada. If insured TRS procedures are unavailable in the Canadian publicly funded system, prior approval may be sought for approval for the procedure in a Canadian private facility. The physician or nurse practitioner indicates the location of the proposed facility and surgeon on the TRS Prior Approval Request available at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/TRS-Request-for-Prior-Approval.pdf>.

Beneficiaries obtaining insured medical services outside of the province may wish to review general information on MCP out-of-province coverage available at www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/outofprovincecoverage.html. Beneficiaries required to travel for TRS services may wish to avail of medical transportation assistance. Details on medical transportation assistance are available at www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/travelassistance.html.

What's not Covered

The following TRS procedures and related expenses are among those not covered by MCP:

- TRS services received without prior approval from MCP.
- TRS services not listed in “What’s Covered” above. Facial feminization, liposuction, tracheal shave, hair transplantation, voice training and voice pitch surgery are examples of TRS services which are currently not covered by MCP.
- Cosmetic surgical revisions.
- Any services which are not insured by MCP. Cosmetic procedures are non-insured services.

Who is Eligible

Eligibility for prior approval for TRS is based on WPATH’s **Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender-Nonconforming People** (SOC) Version 7 (2012).

Eligibility is determined by:

- Information submitted by the patient.
- An assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner. The physician or nurse practitioner must also provide the name of the surgeon and facility for the proposed TRS procedure.
- A surgical readiness assessment(s) by a health care professional(s) meeting minimum WPATH credentials as outlined in the SOC above. These minimum credentials are listed on the Surgical Readiness Assessor Certification and Recommendation form of the TRS Prior Approval Request which is available at www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/pdf/TRS_SRA_Cert_Rec.pdf. A variety of health care professionals may meet WPATH’s minimum credentials. For example, physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, sexologists, and psychologists in Newfoundland and Labrador may possess these credentials. A list of contact information of health care professionals meeting WPATH minimum credentials in the province is located at www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/pdf/TRS_SRA_NL.pdf.

Once the surgical readiness assessment is completed, a physician or nurse practitioner with or without WPATH credentials can forward a TRS Prior Approval Request to the Assistant Medical Director.

In addition to meeting clinical criteria, the following general criteria must also be met in order for TRS to be funded by MCP:

- The patient must receive approval from MCP prior to surgery.
- The patient must be a resident of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- The patient must have a valid MCP health card;
- The surgical facility/surgeon must be approved by MCP.

This process and insured procedures outlined above apply to adult patients seeking TRS. If a child or adolescent is seeking TRS, please refer to the WPATH Standards of Care Chapter 6 available at www.wpath.org/publications/soc.

Prior Approval

In order to receive MCP coverage, all transition-related surgeries must be approved prior to surgery. In order to authorize prior approval for TRS procedures, MCP requires that a Newfoundland and Labrador based physician or nurse practitioner complete and submit a TRS Prior Approval Request available at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/TRS-Request-for-Prior-Approval.pdf>. This application includes a Patient Information Sheet (to be completed by the patient), Clinical Eligibility for TRS (completed by the physician or nurse practitioner) and a surgical readiness assessment(s), as well as a signed Surgical Readiness Assessor Certification and Recommendation(s). The completed application must be forwarded to MCP for review and approval prior to surgery. After review by MCP, the physician (or nurse practitioner) will receive documentation confirming whether or not the proposed procedure and facility is approved. If approved, the patient can be referred to the approved TRS surgeon/facility, enclosing the TRS Prior Approval Request and letter of approval. If a Newfoundland and Labrador based surgeon completed the TRS Prior Approval form and submitted all required documents as indicated **and** is acting as the attending surgeon, there are no further steps necessary if approval has been given.

TRS Requests for Prior Approval should be sent by a physician or nurse practitioner to MCP:

Assistant Medical Director – Medical Services Division
 Department of Health and Community Services
 P.O. 8700 St. John's, NL A1B 4J6
 Phone: 709-758-1557
 Fax : 709-729-5238

Application Package

The TRS Prior Approval Request includes:

- Patient Information Sheet (www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/pdf/TRS_Patient_Info_Sheet.pdf)
- Clinical Eligibility for TRS (www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/pdf/TRS_Clinical_Eligibility.pdf)
- Surgical Readiness Assessor Certification and Recommendation (www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/pdf/TRS_SRA_Cert_Rec.pdf)

All completed applications should be accompanied by one or two surgical readiness assessments meeting criteria as outlined in the TRS Request for Prior Approval.

The TRS Request for Prior Approval in its entirety is located at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/TRS-Request-for-Prior-Approval.pdf>.

Financial Assistance for Travel

Beneficiaries required to travel for TRS services may wish to avail of medical transportation assistance. Details on medical transportation assistance are available at www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/travelassistance.html.

Contact Information:

Assistant Medical Director – Medical Services Division
 Department of Health and Community Services
 P.O. 8700
 St. John's, NL A1B 4J6
 Phone: 709-758-1557
 Fax : 709-729-5238

Additional Information from Supportive Organizations:

GRS Montreal
www.grsmontreal.com/

Rainbow Health Ontario
www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/

Trans Care BC
www.phsa.ca/transcarebc/trans-basics

WPATH Standards of Care Version 7
www.wpath.org/publications/soc