

## TRS Questions and Answers

### **Q1. Is it necessary to travel to the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH), Adult Gender Identity Clinic in Toronto, Ontario?**

**A1.** No, MCP has developed a new local assessment process to aid access to these services. Effective November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019 the surgical readiness assessment(s) required by MCP for TRS may be performed by qualified Newfoundland and Labrador medical providers who meet WPATH criteria. See "Who is Eligible" above as well as a list of providers at the end of this document. A CAMH assessment is no longer required by MCP for coverage of transition-related surgeries.

### **Q2. If I have been assessed at CAMH for TRS, is it necessary to have another surgical readiness assessment completed in Newfoundland and Labrador?**

**A2.** If you have had an assessment at the Adult Gender Identity Clinic at CAMH that recommended the proposed surgery, you will not require further surgical readiness assessments for prior approval. In this case, your physician or nurse practitioner should submit a copy of the surgical readiness assessment from CAMH. A Surgical Readiness Assessor Certification and Recommendation form is not required.

### **Q3. Is financial assistance available for travel required to access the surgical readiness assessment and/or approved transition-related surgeries in Newfoundland and Labrador?**

**A3.** Yes, if a MCP beneficiary must travel to access a medically necessary insured service which is not available in their area of residence, the beneficiary may be eligible for financial assistance for the cost of the travel required to access the service. The Medical Transportation Assistance Program (MTAP) provides financial assistance for airfare, accommodation, meals and local transportation. Some restrictions may apply, please visit the MTAP website for program rules and an application form(s) at [www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/travelassistance.html](http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/travelassistance.html).

### **Q4. What is a surgical readiness assessment?**

**A4.** A surgical readiness assessment is a recommended requirement of the WPATH Standards of Care (SOC) ([www.wpath.org/publications/soc](http://www.wpath.org/publications/soc)) for surgical treatments for gender dysphoria in order to promote optimal patient care. WPATH recommends one surgical readiness assessment for breast/chest surgeries and two assessments for genital surgeries. The surgical readiness assessment(s) ensures that the criteria outlined in the SOC have been met. The surgical readiness assessment(s) must be completed by a qualified mental health professional who meets the minimum WPATH credentials. The minimum credentials of health professionals required to complete a surgical

readiness assessment are located at [www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/pdf/TRS\\_SRA\\_Cert\\_Rec.pdf](http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/pdf/TRS_SRA_Cert_Rec.pdf). The recommended content of the surgical readiness assessment is listed at [https://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/pdf/TRS\\_Recommended\\_Content\\_SRA.pdf](https://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/mcp/pdf/TRS_Recommended_Content_SRA.pdf).

#### **Q5. What is WPATH?**

**A5.** The World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) is an international, multidisciplinary, professional association whose mission is to promote evidence-based care, education, research, advocacy, public policy, and respect in transsexual and transgender health. The WPATH Standard of Care (SOC) is widely viewed as one of the most authoritative sources for transsexual and transgender health. The overall goal of the SOC “is to provide clinical guidance for health professionals to assist transsexual, transgender, and gender-nonconforming people with safe and effective pathways to achieving lasting personal comfort with their gendered selves”.

#### **Q6. How do I receive prior approval for Transition-Related Surgery from MCP?**

**A6.** Your physician or nurse practitioner is responsible for forwarding the TRS Request for Prior Approval and all required documents to MCP on your behalf. MCP will review the information, including the proposed surgery and requested facility/surgeon and will notify the physician or nurse practitioner whether or not your surgery qualifies for MCP coverage. Your physician/nurse practitioner will notify you of the approval (or denial) and will then refer you to the approved facility/surgeon if approved. Alternatively, a surgeon in the province can complete the TRS Request for Prior Approval. Upon approval, the surgeon then undertakes the requested procedure.

#### **Q7. Where can I have my surgery?**

**A7.** Many transition-related surgeries are not available in Newfoundland and Labrador and some are not available in Canadian publicly funded health care facilities. MCP only provides coverage when the surgery is performed at a public facility. However, if an insured TRS procedure is not available at a public facility in Canada, a private facility in Canada may be approved by MCP. The physician or nurse practitioner must indicate on the TRS Request for Prior Approval the facility and surgeon for the proposed procedure.

#### **Q8. How long will I wait for surgery?**

**A8.** Wait times for surgery vary depending on the individual health care needs of the patient, the surgery required and the facility approved. A local surgical readiness assessment process is hoped to decrease current wait times for TRS.

**Q9. I have prior approval for a TRS procedure in another province. Is that acceptable for approval for TRS by MCP?**

**A9.** No. If you have prior approval for TRS from another jurisdiction, you must still have prior approval for TRS by MCP using the MCP TRS Request for Prior Approval (see the form at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/files/TRS-Request-for-Prior-Approval.pdf>) for the surgery to be covered by MCP. Prior approval for TRS is not transferrable from one jurisdiction to another.