

MEDICAL POLICY STATEMENT

Michigan Health Link

| Policy Name & Number | Date Effective |
|---|-----------------------|
| Gender Affirming Surgery-MI Health Link-MM-1575 | 06/01/2024-09/30/2024 |
| Policy Type | |
| MEDICAL | |

Medical Policy Statement prepared by CareSource and its affiliates are derived from literature based on and supported by clinical guidelines, nationally recognized utilization and technology assessment guidelines, other medical management industry standards, and published MCO clinical policy guidelines. Medically necessary services include, but are not limited to, those health care services or supplies that are proper and necessary for the diagnosis or treatment of disease, illness, or injury and without which the patient can be expected to suffer prolonged, increased or new morbidity, impairment of function, dysfunction of a body organ or part, or significant pain and discomfort. These services meet the standards of good medical practice in the local area, are the lowest cost alternative, and are not provided mainly for the convenience of the member or provider. Medically necessary services also include those services defined in any Evidence of Coverage documents, Medical Policy Statements, Provider Manuals, Member Handbooks, and/or other policies and procedures.

Medical Policy Statements prepared by CareSource and its affiliates do not ensure an authorization or payment of services. Please refer to the plan contract (often referred to as the Evidence of Coverage) for the service(s) referenced in the Medical Policy Statement. If there is a conflict between the Medical Policy Statement and the plan contract (i.e., Evidence of Coverage), then the plan contract (i.e., Evidence of Coverage) will be the controlling document used to make the determination. According to the rules of Mental Health Parity Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA), coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of a behavioral health disorder will not be subject to any limitations that are less favorable than the limitations that apply to medical conditions as covered under this policy.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| A. Subject..... | 2 |
| B. Background..... | 2 |
| C. Definitions | 2 |
| D. Policy | 3 |
| E. Conditions of Coverage..... | 7 |
| F. Related Policies/Rules..... | 7 |
| G. Review/Revision History..... | 7 |
| H. References..... | 7 |

A. Subject

Gender Affirming Surgery

B. Background

Individuals with gender dysphoria display psychological distress resulting from an incongruence between sex assigned at birth based on external genitalia and gender identity, or one's psychological sense of gender. Gender expression involves the way an individual presents "self" to the world and may or may not align with gender identity. Gender affirmation can include social domains, such as changing pronouns, legal domains, such as changing one's name or gender marker's, medical domains, such as use of gender-affirming hormones, or surgical domains, including vaginoplasty or breast augmentation.

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revised* (DSM-R-TR), provides for one overarching diagnosis of gender dysphoria with separate criteria for children, adolescents, and adults all involving a marked incongruence between experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender with other associated criteria. Treatment varies for each individual but can include psychotherapy, hormone therapy, and/or surgical approaches. Support may also include affirmation in various domains, family and societal group support, and peer support.

C. Definitions

- **Behavioral Health Provider** – A provider of behavioral health (BH) services (minimum master's level), including a psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychiatric nurse practitioner.
- **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR)** – The standard language by which clinicians, researchers, and public health officials in the United States communicate about mental disorders and subsequent criteria and classification.
- **Female-to-Male (FtM or Transmasculine)** – An individual born or assigned female at birth ("natal female") changing or changed to a more masculine body or gender role.
- **Gender Affirming Surgeon** – Board-certified urologist, gynecologist, plastic surgeon, or general surgeon competent in urological diagnosis and treatment of transgender issues.
- **Gender Affirming Surgery** – Surgery to change primary and/or secondary sex characteristics to affirm gender identity (ie, intersex or transgender surgery, gender reassignment or confirmation surgery) and includes "top" surgery, such as mastectomy, and genital or "bottom" surgery, such as hysterectomy, oophorectomy, vaginectomy, metoidioplasty, and phalloplasty.
- **Gender Dysphoria** – An individual's affective and/or cognitive discontent or distress that may accompany incongruence between one's experienced or expressed gender and one's assigned gender, lasting at least 6 months and meeting diagnostic criteria listed in the *DSM-5-TR*.
- **Gender Identity** – A person's inner sense or identification as male, female, a combination of both, or neither and may be different from sex assigned at birth.
- **Male-to-Female (MtF or Transfeminine)** – An individual born or assigned male at birth ("natal male") changing or changed to a more feminine body or gender role.

The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

- **Non-Binary/Gender Queer** – An individual identifying as neither exclusively male nor female but different from gender assigned at birth, including changing to a more masculinized or feminized gender role.
- **Sex** – Usually based on the appearance of external genitalia and defined as male or female as understood in the context of reproductive capacity (ie, sex hormones, chromosomes, gonads and non-ambiguous external and internal genitalia). At times, sex is assigned when external genitalia are ambiguous.
- **Transgender (Trans)** – An umbrella term for persons whose gender identity does not align in a traditional sense with the gender assigned at birth.

D. Policy

It is the policy of CareSource to comply with state and federal regulations. CareSource treats all members consistent with his/her gender identity and does not deny or limit health services that ordinarily or exclusively are available to individuals of one sex to a transgender individual because the individual's sex or gender is different from the one to which health services are normally or exclusively available. CareSource covers those services that are medically necessary. In determining services that are medically necessary, or the coverage of health services related to gender transition, CareSource utilizes neutral standards supported by evidence-based criteria.

For issues regarding hormonal treatment for members refer to pharmacy policy, "Gender-Affirming Hormone Therapy Pharmacy Policy." Due to the virtual nonexistence of research in these populations, particularly regarding long-term outcomes, safety data, and United States Institutional Review Board oversight, CareSource reviews the literature and policies annually and when new literature becomes available. Notwithstanding the foregoing, CareSource reviews each request on a case-by-case basis in accordance with medical necessity policies, as well as federal and state regulations for sterilization.

- I. CareSource considers gender affirming surgeries for transition and nonbinary members ages 18 years and older medically necessary when the following clinical criteria are met:
 - A. Breast augmentation for male to female transition is not covered. Mastectomy for female to male transition or other top surgery requests require the following:
 1. Unless there is a well-documented contraindication or refusal to take hormones, at least 6 months of continuous hormone treatment is required to be considered for surgery. Hormone trial must be with a medication prescribed to the member and managed by a healthcare provider (eg, an endocrinologist, primary care provider or experienced prescriber working in a center/clinic specializing in the treatment of gender affirming care). Evidence of lab monitoring of hormone levels must be provided.
 2. One letter of recommendation from a behavior health (BH) provider to the surgeon is required. The letter must contain a BH evaluation conducted by a fully licensed mental health professional who possesses, at a minimum, a master's degree or equivalent in a clinical behavioral science field and has experience in the treatment and assessment of gender dysphoria. The provider must

The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

communicate willingness to be available to treat the member during transition or make appropriate referral if member needs assistance with BH treatment.

- a. The BH provider has evaluated the member within the past 12 months of the time of referral.
 01. If member has been in BH treatment, it is preferred that the recommendation is made by the treating BH provider.
 02. If there is not a treating BH provider, a letter of recommendation may be made by a consulting BH provider.
 03. If the BH provider is on the treatment team with the surgeon, documentation in the clinical record is an option in lieu of a letter.
- b. Content of the BH provider referral letter must address all the following:
 01. Member has a gender dysphoria diagnosis persistent for 6 months or longer at the time of the medical necessity review request.
 02. A member-specific treatment plan to address treatment, including hormonal treatment and/or surgery, as well as BH during the transition period.
 03. Member has capacity to and gives informed consent for surgery, as well as understanding that surgery may not achieve the desired results.
 04. If co-existing mental illness and/or substance related disorder are present, it is relatively well controlled with no recent, active intravenous drug use or suicide attempts or behaviors.
 05. The degree to which the member has followed the standards of care to date and the likelihood of future compliance.
3. Surgeon documentation requirements include all the following:
 - a. results of medical and psychological assessment, including diagnosis(-es) and identifying characteristics
 - b. surgery plan
 - c. documentation of informed consent discussion, including the following:
 01. notation of discussion of risks, benefits, and alternatives to treatment, including no hormonal or surgical treatment, and member understanding that surgery may not resolve gender dysphoria
 02. medical stability for surgery and anesthesia
 03. expected outcome(s)
- B. For genital or bottom surgery (eg, clitoroplasty, metoidioplasty, penectomy, vaginectomy) for members ages 18 and older:
 1. At least 6 months of continuous hormone treatment is required to be considered for surgery unless there is a well-documented contraindication or refusal to take hormones. A hormone trial must be with a medication prescribed by a healthcare provider managing care, including an endocrinologist, primary care provider or experienced prescriber working in a center/clinic specializing in the treatment of gender affirming care. Evidence of lab monitoring of hormone levels must be provided.
 2. Hair removal may be approved based on medical necessity when skin flap area contains hair needing to be removed.

The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

3. One letter of recommendation from a BH provider to the surgeon is required. The letter must contain a BH evaluation conducted by a fully licensed mental health professional who possesses, at a minimum, a master's degree or equivalent in a clinical behavioral science field and has experience in the treatment and assessment of gender dysphoria. The provider must communicate willingness to be available to treat the member during transition or make appropriate referral if member needs assistance with BH treatment.
 - a. The BH provider has evaluated the member within the past 12 months of the time of referral.
 01. If member has been in treatment, it is preferred that one of the recommendations is made by the treating BH provider.
 02. If there is not a treating BH provider, one letter of recommendation needs to be made from a psychologist, psychiatrist, or psychiatric nurse practitioner.
 03. If the BH provider is on the treatment team with the surgeon, documentation in the clinical record is an option in lieu of a letter.
 - b. Content of referral must address all the following:
 01. Duration of evaluator's relationship with the member.
 02. Member has a gender dysphoria diagnosis persistent for 6 months or longer at the time of the medical necessity review request.
 03. Member has capacity to and gives informed consent for surgery.
 04. A member specific treatment plan to address treatment, including hormonal treatment and/or surgery, as well as BH during this transition period.
 05. Member has had a 12 month or longer real-life experience congruent with gender identity. This timeline may be modified with corroborating documentation indicating a safety concern.
 06. If co-existing mental illness and/or substance related disorder is present, it is relatively well controlled with no recent, active intravenous drug use or suicide attempts or behaviors.
 07. The degree to which the member has followed the standards of care to date and the likelihood of future compliance.
4. Surgeon documentation requirements include all the following:
 - a. results of medical and psychological assessment, including diagnosis (-es) and identifying characteristics
 - b. surgery plan
 - c. documentation of informed consent discussion, including the following:
 01. notation of discussion of risks, benefits, and alternatives to treatment, including no treatment, and member understanding that surgery may not resolve gender dysphoria
 02. hair removal
 03. medical stability for surgery and anesthesia
 04. expected outcome(s)

- II. Procedures or surgeries to enhance secondary sex characteristics are considered cosmetic and are not medically necessary. A list of services, procedures, or surgeries not covered is included below. This list may not be all inclusive.
 - A. reversal of genital surgery or reversal of surgery to revise secondary sex characteristics
 - B. abdominoplasty
 - C. blepharoplasty
 - D. brow lift
 - E. body contouring
 - F. botulinum toxin treatments (ie, Botox, Dysport, Xeomin, Jeuveau)
 - G. breast augmentation
 - H. calf, cheek, chin, malar, pectoral, and/or nose implants
 - I. collagen injections
 - J. drugs for hair loss or hair growth
 - K. face lifts
 - L. facial bone reduction or facial feminization
 - M. perineal skin hair removal
 - N. hair removal for vaginoplasty without creation of neovagina or when genital surgery is not yet required or not approved
 - O. hair replacement
 - P. lip enhancement or reduction
 - Q. liposuction
 - R. mastopexy
 - S. neck tightening
 - T. plastic surgery on eyes
 - U. reduction thyroid chondroplasty
 - V. rhinoplasty
 - W. skin resurfacing
 - X. voice modification surgery (laryngoplasty or shortening of the vocal cords), voice therapy, or voice lessons
 - Y. any other surgeries or procedures deemed not medically necessary
 - Z. reproduction services including but not limited to sperm preservation, oocyte preservation, cryopreservation of embryos, surrogate parenting, donor eggs and donor sperm and host uterus

- III. CareSource treats all members consistent with gender identity and does not deny or limit health services that ordinarily or exclusively are available to individuals of one sex to a transgender individual based on the fact that the individual's sex or gender is different from the one to which health services are normally or exclusively available. Examples of such services include the following:
 - A. breast cancer screening for transgender men and nonbinary people who were assigned female at birth
 - B. prostate cancer screening for transgender women and nonbinary people who were assigned male at birth

The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

E. Conditions of Coverage
NA

F. Related Policies/Rules
Medical Necessity Determinations

G. Review/Revision History

| | DATE | ACTION |
|-----------------------|------------|---|
| Date Issued | 12/13/2023 | New policy. Approved at Committee. |
| Date Revised | 03/13/2024 | Annual review. Changed HRT from 12 to 6 mos (MCG 28 th). Updated H. Approved at Committee. |
| Date Effective | 06/01/2024 | |
| Date Archived | 09/30/2024 | This Policy is no longer active and has been archived. Please note that there could be other Policies that may have some of the same rules incorporated and CareSource reserves the right to follow CMS/State/NCCI guidelines without a formal documented Policy. |

H. References

1. Adelson SL; American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Committee on Quality Issues. Practice parameter on gay, lesbian, or bisexual sexual orientation, gender nonconformity, and gender discordance in children and adolescents. *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2012;51(9):957-974. doi:10.1016/j.jaac.2012.07.004
2. American Psychiatric Association. *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, fifth edition, text revised (DSM-5-TR)*. American Psychiatric Association; 2022.
3. American Psychological Association. Guidelines for psychological practice with transgender and gender nonconforming people. *Amer Psychiatry*. 2015;70(9):832-864. doi:10.1037/a0039906
4. Carroll N. Sexual and gender minority women (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, plus): medical and reproductive care. UpToDate. Updated May 30, 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.uptodate.com
5. Coleman E, Radix AE, Bouman WP, et al. Standards of care for the health of transgender and gender diverse people, version 8. *Int J Transg Health*. 2022;23(S1):S1-S258. doi:10.1080/26895269.2022.2100644
6. *Decision Memo for Gender Dysphoria and Gender Reassignment*. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; 2016. CAG 00446N. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.cms.gov
7. Evidence Analysis Research Brief: Body Contouring Procedures in Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2022. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
8. Evidence Analysis Research Brief: Facial Feminization Surgical Procedures in Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2022. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
9. Evidence Analysis Research Brief: Female-To-Male Gender-Affirming Surgical Procedures for Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
10. Evidence Analysis Research Brief: Hair Removal in Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2022. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com

The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

11. Evidence Analysis Research Brief: Hormone Therapy for Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2022. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
12. Evidence Analysis Research Brief: Male-To-Female Gender-Affirming Surgical Procedures for Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
13. Evidence Analysis Research Brief: Pubertal Suppression for Prepubertal Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2022. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
14. Evidence Analysis Research Brief: Vocal Cord Surgery for Voice Feminization in Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2022. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
15. Evolving Evidence Review: Combination Facial Feminization Surgery in Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
16. Evolving Evidence Review: Female-To-Male Gender-Affirming Surgical Procedures for Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
17. Evolving Evidence Review: Gender-Affirming Body-Contouring Procedures in Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
18. Evolving Evidence Review: Gender-Affirming Hair Removal for Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
19. Evolving Evidence Review: Hair Removal Procedures Before Gender Affirming Surgery in Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
20. Evolving Evidence Review: Male-To-Female Gender-Affirming Surgical Procedures for Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
21. Evolving Evidence Review: Masculinizing Voice and Communication Therapy for Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
22. Evolving Evidence Review: Wendler Glottoplasty Surgery for Voice Feminization in Patients with Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2023. Updated February 26, 2024. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
23. Feldman J, Deutsch M. Primary care of transgender individuals. UptoDate. Updated June 30, 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.uptodate.com
24. Ferrando C. Gender-affirming surgery: male to female. UptoDate. Updated August 30, 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.uptodate.com
25. Ferrando C, Zhao L, Nikolavsky D. Gender-affirming surgery: female to male. UptoDate. Updated January 2, 2024. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.uptodate.com
26. Forcier M. Gender development and clinical presentation of gender diversity in children and adolescents. UptoDate. Updated December 5, 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.uptodate.com
27. Gender-affirming surgery or procedure GRG: GG-FMMF. 28th ed. MCG Health. Updated February 1, 2024. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.careweb.careguidelines.com
28. *Gender Dysphoria and Gender Reassignment Surgery*. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; 2016. NCD ID 140.9. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.cms.gov

The MEDICAL Policy Statement detailed above has received due consideration as defined in the MEDICAL Policy Statement Policy and is approved.

29. Health Technology Assessment: Sex Reassignment Surgery for the Treatment of Gender Dysphoria. Hayes; 2018. Updated July 27, 2022. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.evidence.hayesinc.com
30. Hembree WC, Cohen-Kettenis PT, Gooren L, et al. Gender dysphoria/gender incongruence guidelines resources. Endocrine Society. Published September 1, 2017. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.endocrine.org
31. Hembree W, Cohen-Kettenis P, Gooren L, et al. Endocrine treatment of gender-dysphoric/gender-incongruent persons: an endocrine society clinical practice guideline. *Endocr Pract.* 2017;102(11):3869-3903. doi:10.4158/1934-2403-23.12.1437
32. *Medicaid Provider Manual*. Michigan Health and Human Services. Updated January 1, 2024. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.mdch.state.mi.us
33. Mental Health Code, MICH. COMP. LAWS § 330.1100a (2024).
34. Mental Health Code, MICH. COMP. LAWS § 330.1901a (2024).
35. Olson-Kennedy J, Forcier M. Management of transgender and gender-diverse children and adolescents. Uptodate. Updated January 5, 2024, Accessed February 27, 2024. www.uptodate.com
36. Safer J, Tangpricha V. Transgender men: evaluation and management. UptoDate. Updated June 30, 2023. Accessed August 10, 2023. www.uptodate.com
37. Safer J, Tangpricha V. Transgender women: evaluation and management. UptoDate. Updated October 12, 2023. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.uptodate.com
38. Transgender health treatments. Endocrine Society. Published March 10, 2022. Accessed February 27, 2024. www.endocrine.org