

Clarification on Gender Confirming Surgeries

Following the announcement by the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness (“DHW”) of gender confirming surgeries being covered, NSRAP has been seeking clarification around the coverage of chest surgeries and whether this will meet the chest masculinization needs of transmen.

DHW had announced coverage for mastectomies, carried out in Nova Scotia, however they had also indicated that they would not be covering chest masculinization, leading to some confusion and uncertainty. NSRAP received clarification around these procedures today.

According to DHW, multiple types of mastectomy are currently carried out in Nova Scotia. A nipple sparing mastectomy process is available in Nova Scotia, and this process would be the most common for transgender patients. Mastectomies as part of a gender transition would be carried out specifically with the objective of attaining a masculine appearing chest. Specific details around the most appropriate type of procedure, desired outcomes and requirements would be discussed between individual patients and surgeons.

The Department also clarified the chest masculinization / chest contouring procedures that will not be included. Those not covered are procedures that fall outside of the regular mastectomy process, such as liposuction or pectoral implants.

DHW also confirmed that Nova Scotia has the qualified surgeons to perform these procedures and will be providing information on the surgeons to Pride Health to disseminate to referring doctors. NSRAP welcomes the confirmation that chest surgeries / mastectomies will focus on meeting the required outcomes of transgender men. As these procedures have not generally been performed in the public medical system in Nova Scotia, the Transgender community are unfamiliar with the surgeons providing these services and will look forward to further information in this area.

The Question and Answer document prepared by DHW has been updated with the following:

Is chest masculinization and/or chest contouring now publically funded?

The province is now funding mastectomies, including nipple-sparing mastectomies which can be part of a transition from Female to Male. The outcome of mastectomies for FtM transition would be to create a chest that more closely resembles a male chest. The province is not covering chest masculinization and/or chest contouring, which typically involve liposuction and implants.