

Gender-Affirming Services in Saskatchewan

A resource from the Canadian Queer
Medical Students Association, cqmsa.org



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FOREWORD

Gender-affirming medical services are available and accessible in Saskatchewan. This guide provides information concerning various aspects of gender affirming care, including healthcare coverage, legal name changes, medication, surgery and other local resources. To begin the process of medical transition such as getting hormones, a patient will need to be followed by a family doctor, pediatrician, or endocrinologist. Alternatively, there are medical clinics who take in trans patients to begin or to continue transition-related care. A list of these clinics can be found in the next section entitled “Gender-Inclusive Clinics”. The following discussion only applies to people covered by the public provincial healthcare insurance, [Saskatchewan Health Benefits](#). If a patient has private insurance, the coverage of these services may differ.

DISCLAIMER: this document was created by the Canadian Queer Medical Students Association (CQMSA) with the intention of helping medical providers in New Brunswick navigate and provide gender-affirming care. This document contains a collection of services and providers which are constantly changing, especially given the nature of the work and the increased stress and demand which community organizations have experienced with COVID-19. We have done our best to provide up-to-date content but cannot promise the continued accessibility of some of these services. Please read with discretion. If you notice incorrect information, or you would like to notify us about different resources, please email: info@cqmsa.org

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PROVINCIAL HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

In order to access health services in Saskatchewan, you will need to present your Saskatchewan Health Card at the point of access. This card serves as proof of Saskatchewan Health coverage.

If you are a newcomer, then you will be considered eligible for coverage assuming your permanent residence is in the province and you spend at least 6 months of the year within Saskatchewan. After applying, you will have Saskatchewan Health coverage beginning on the first day of the third month following the date you established residency in Saskatchewan. Your home province will generally cover you until your Saskatchewan benefits take effect.

To learn more about eligibility or to apply for a Saskatchewan Health Card, please visit [eHealth Saskatchewan](#).

NAME AND GENDER MARKER CHANGES

Changing Legal Identity Markers

A legal name change can be requested through eHealth Saskatchewan (1-800-667-7551). Forms will be emailed or mailed to you and will need to be notarized before returning. You will be required to submit a photocopy of photo identification and a recent criminal record check with this application. A name change declaration, new birth certificate, and new health card will then be mailed to you upon completion of the process.

Gender marker change is conducted through the same process as the legal name change process described above. Both changes can be completed at the same time. A gender neutral 'x' marker is now available.

When changing other forms of identification, a driver's license change can be processed at any issuer. The new birth certificate and name change declaration must be presented to the issuer at the time of request. Changes to passports will require the individual to apply for a new passport entirely.

The individual must remember to update any changed information with Service Canada, the CRA, and all personal accounts on their own after completing the change.

MEDICAL AND SURGICAL OPTIONS

Age of Medical Consent

In Saskatchewan, the age of medical consent is the same as the age of majority (18 years old). However, like many Canadian provinces and territories, Saskatchewan follows a common law principle in which minors who are deemed capable of making informed decisions about their health may do so without the consent of a legal guardian. These laws are not written anywhere, and different providers can have varying definitions and requirements for their younger patients to be deemed capable of making these kinds of decisions.

Additionally, the type of medical treatment being requested, and the assumed risk of treatment, might change a provider's willingness to treat a minor without a guardian's consent. For example, if a minor wants to start birth control pills without parental consent and they can maturely understand the risks and proper use of the medication, a provider may be willing to prescribe these pills without involving any legal guardians. However, if the same minor decides that they would like to undergo a surgical procedure which carries more risk or long-term impact, like a hysterectomy, a provider may decide that the minor is not capable of making this decision alone. Because these decisions are at the discretion of each individual provider, it is recommended that you talk with your provider and get a clear understanding of what will be kept confidential/ what treatments you can consent to as a minor before starting any medical therapy. If you are concerned about your guardian learning about information you have disclosed/would like to disclose to a provider, we recommend you specify this to your provider.

Medication

Hormonal therapy is an important part of gender-affirming care which promotes physiologic masculinization/feminization for people experiencing gender dysphoria. The decision to start hormonal therapy should be patient-centered and involves informed consent including discussion of the potential risks of starting and withholding treatment. Patients should be assessed for their physical and psychological readiness for hormonal therapy prior to starting treatment. If you are considering prescribing these medications in your clinical practice, we suggest reviewing the [WPATH Standards of Care](#) and [Rainbow Health Point-of-Care Guidelines](#) for assessing patient preparedness, safety, and clinical monitoring.

For transitioning individuals, the main bulk of hormone medications are: androgens (AFAB), estrogen (AMAB), and hormone blockers.

Residents who have an active Saskatchewan health card would be eligible for coverage of certain hormone replacement therapy listed on the Saskatchewan Formulary (described below). Individuals would pay according to their approved co-payment. Inquiries about hormone therapy coverage can be directed to the Ministry of Health's Drug Plan and Extended Benefits Branch at 1-800-667-7581 or 306-787-3317. For more information please consult [here](#).

For dosing guidelines and recommendations, please refer to the [BC Endocrine Therapy Guidelines for Transgender Adults \(2015\)](#).

Medication	Commercial Name	Type	Dose Strength
Androgens (AFAB)			
Danazole	Cyclomen	Capsules	50 mg
			100 mg, 100 caps
			200 mg, 100 caps
Testosterone cypionate	Depo-Testosterone	Injectable solution	100mg/mL, 10mL
	Taro-Testosterone Cypionate		100mg/10mL, 10mL
Testosterone enanthate	Delatestryl	Injectable solution	200mg/mL, 5mL
Testosterone undecanoate	pms-Testosterone	Capsules	40mg, 100
			40mg, 120
	Taro-Testosterone	Capsules	40mg, 60
			40mg, 120
Estrogens (AMAB)			
17β-Estradiol	Estring	Vaginal ring	2mg, 1
	Estrace	Tablet	0.5mg, 100
			1.0mg, 100
			2.0mg, 100
			0.5mg, 100
	Lupin-Estradiol	Tablet	1.0mg, 100
			2.0mg, 100
			10mcg, 18
Conjugated estrogen	Premarin	Vaginal cream	0.625mg/g, 30g
		Tablet	0.625mg
			0.3mg
			1.25mg

Source: <https://formulary.drugplan.ehealthsask.ca/SearchFormulary>

GENDER-AFFIRMING SERVICES

In Saskatchewan, initiating care and prescribing hormones can be done by any family doctor or nurse practitioner who is comfortable doing so. If the patient's family doctor is unwilling to assist with hormones and transitioning, then the patient may need to seek out or be referred to a provider listed in the next section. Unfortunately, many of the providers who advertise their willingness to provide gender-affirming care are often not accepting new patients or have extensive wait lists.

In order to access gender-affirming surgeries in Saskatchewan, the patient must have lived in their preferred gender role for one year. Additionally, if the patient is undergoing hormone therapy then they must be finished their first year of taking this medication. Once these criteria are met, the patient may be referred for surgery. If the surgery is offered in province, then the referral may be made directly to the surgeon by any family doctor or nurse practitioner.

If the surgery is not offered in Saskatchewan, then extra steps are required prior to funding approval for out-of-province surgery. Patients must be seen by two "recognized authorities", who will then send their recommendation for funding approval to the Ministry of Health. For a list of currently approved recognized authorities, please visit [here](#).

Approval for gender-affirming procedures is based on criteria set out by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). For an overview of gender-affirming procedures and services in Saskatchewan, please reference the following table. Criteria for approval are included if time-sensitive, but an exhaustive list of approval criteria can be found by referencing the [WPATH standards of care](#).

Medical Procedure	Insurance Coverage	Criteria for Approval	Providers
Gender-Affirming Products	No	1.Youth aged 13-24 (GAPS) 2. -	1. GAPS 2.Contact Trans Health Navigators for specific providers
Fertility Treatments	No	-	Aurora Reproductive Care (Saskatoon)
Electrolysis/Hair Removal	No	-	Various cosmetic clinics in SK.
Feminizing/ Masculinizing Voice Therapy	Yes	Self-referral	Christie Ife, Speech Language Centre (Saskatoon, 306-655-8180)
Psychologist	Not covered if seeing private psychologist	-	For an exhaustive list, see: The Q List
Medications			
Hormone Blockers	Yes	Must meet WPATH criteria for hormone blocker initiation	Any family doctor or nurse practitioner
Hormone Replacement Therapy	Yes	Must meet WPATH criteria for hormone readiness	
Surgeries			
AFAB Top Surgeries			
Breast Reduction	No	-	Various plastic surgeons in SK.
Chest Masculinization	No	Referral from GP	Regina: Dr. Dan Kozan, Emerald Park, SK Out of Province: - GRS Montreal, Montreal - Women's College Hospital, Toronto - Various BC Surgeons
Mastectomy	Yes	Referral from GP Hormone therapy is not a prerequisite.	Saskatoon: Dr. Pamela Meiers at Breast Health Centre Regina: Dr. Dan Kozan (306-519-8737)

Medical Procedure	Insurance Coverage	Criteria for Approval	Providers
AFAB Bottom Surgeries - Removal			
Hysterectomy	Yes	Referral from any doctor or nurse practitioner to surgeon 1 year living in gender role, 1 year on hormones if applicable.	Regina: Dr. John Thiel (306-586-1800) Saskatoon: Dr. Melissa Mirosh at City Centre Family Physicians , Dr. Barry Gilliland at Saskatoon OBGYN Consultants
Oophorectomy	Yes	1 year living in gender role, 1 year on hormones if applicable.	
AFAB Bottom Surgeries - Construction			
Erectile/Testicular Implants	-	Included in Metoidioplasty	-
Metoidioplasty	Yes	Assessment by two recognized authorities. 1 year living in gender role, 1 year on hormones if applicable.	Referred out of province.
Testicular/Erectile Implants	Yes	Assessment by two recognized authorities. 1 year living in gender role, 1 year on hormones if applicable.	Referred out of province.
AMAB Facial Surgeries			
Facial Feminization Surgery	No	Referral from GP	Not offered in province Out of Province: - GRS Montreal, Montreal - Alberta Surgical Centre, Edmonton - Various BC Surgeons
Tracheal Shaving	No	Referral from GP	Not offered in province. Out of Province: - GRS Montreal, Montreal - Women's College Hospital, Toronto - Alberta Surgical Centre, Edmonton Various BC Surgeons
AMAB Top Surgery			
Breast Augmentation	No	Referral from GP	Various plastic surgeons in SK.

Medical Procedure	Insurance Coverage	Criteria for Approval	Providers
AMAB Bottom Surgeries - Removal			
Orchidectomy	Yes	1 year living in gender role, 1 year on hormones if applicable.	Saskatoon: Dr. Kishore Visvanathan at Saskatoon Urology Associates
Penectomy	-	Included in vaginoplasty	-
AMAB Bottom Surgeries - Construction			
Cliteroplasty	Yes	Assessment by two recognized authorities. 1 year living in gender role, 1 year on hormones if applicable.	Not offered in province.
Labioplasty	Yes	Assessment by two recognized authorities. 1 year living in gender role, 1 year on hormones if applicable.	
Vaginoplasty	Yes	Assessment by two recognized authorities. 1 year living in gender role, 1 year on hormones if applicable.	
Vulvoplasty	Yes	Assessment by two recognized authorities. 1 year living in gender role, 1 year on hormones if applicable.	

GENDER-AFFIRMING SUPPORT AND SERVICES

Gender-Inclusive Clinics

Unfortunately, Saskatchewan does not currently have any clinics specializing in gender-affirming care specifically. However, a number of providers accepting new patients have advertised their willingness to offer gender-affirming care within their practice:

Saskatoon

- Dr. Carla Holinaty, at Westwinds Primary Health Centre (3311 Fairlight Drive, 306-665-4250). Waitlist is roughly 7 months.
- Dr. Ginger Ruddy, at Westwinds Primary Health Centre (3311 Fairlight Drive, 306-665-4250).
- Dr. Christine Otani, at [Packham Avenue Medical Clinic](#).
- Dr. Veronica Mckinney, at [Westside Community Clinic](#).
- Dr. Leane Pask, at [Downtown Community Clinic](#). Waitlist is currently 1 year.
- Rachel Johnson (NP), at [SWITCH](#)

Regina

- Dr. Thomas Perron, at Queen City Medical Specialists (1120 11th Ave, 306-546-7750). Only accepting patients over 16 years old, and will require a referral.
- Dr. Megan Clark, at [Academic Family Medicine Unit](#). Access will require self-identifying as a transgender patient when booking.

Community Groups, Social Networking, and Patient Navigators

- Trans Umbrella Foundation on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)
- Social Programming for Trans Individuals at [OUT Saskatoon](#)
- Saskatchewan Queer and Trans Youth Network on [Facebook](#)
- Resilience Trans Support Group through [URegina Pride](#)

Other Resources

- TransSask Support Services - transsask.ca
- Government of Saskatchewan, Gender Identity, Gender Diversity, and Transgender Support - <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/health/accessing-health-care-services/gender-identity-gender-diversity-and-transgender-support>
- Q-List, Queer and Trans-friendly Providers in SK - https://www.outsaskatoon.ca/q_list
- OutSaskatoon, Trans Resource Page - <https://www.outsaskatoon.ca/trans>
- UR Pride Centre For Sexuality and Gender Diversity - <https://www.urpride.ca>