

Policy Key: Gender Dysphoria

TriWest Clinical Operations – TRICARE West

SCOPE

This Policy Key provides criteria to use during the medical necessity review for treating Gender Dysphoria (GD).

NOT COVERED

- In compliance with the May 9, 2025, and February 26, 2025 memoranda, service member requests for any of the following are denied [6]:
 - Referrals/request for authorization that are received for private sector care for all **unscheduled, scheduled, or planned surgical procedures** associated with facilitating sex reassignment,
 - For **surgical evaluations** for gender affirming surgery (GAS),
 - For **newly initiated cross-sex hormone therapy** as treatment for GD, unless an approved waiver from the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs is received.
- Effective April 21, 2025, initiation and continuation of puberty blockers and cross-sex hormone therapy to individuals **under the age of 19 with a diagnosis of gender dysphoria (GD)** within the direct care component are prohibited. Military treatment facility (MTF) providers [5]:
 - must immediately discontinue **pubertal suppressants**,
 - must immediately discontinue **cross-sex hormones**,
 - are prohibited from **writing prescriptions** for pubertal suppressants or cross-sex hormones (*see Coverage Criteria for tapering options*)
- All previously approved Supplemental Health Care Program (SHCP) waivers for surgical care are cancelled (*see Coverage Criteria for surgical complications and necessary repairs*). [6]
- Cosmetic, reconstructive or plastic surgery procedures. [1]
- Endocrine treatment of prepubertal children prior to Tanner Stage. [1]
- All services and supplies to preserve fertility. [1]
- Voice therapy by a speech language pathologist to transform speech patterns of the affirmed gender. [1]

COVERAGE CRITERIA

- **Medically necessary care to address surgical complications and necessary repairs:**
 - New SHCP waiver request must be submitted and reviewed by the office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs. [6]
- **Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy for Minors** [4]
 - **Cross-sex Hormones.** When MTF providers and beneficiary patients opt to taper:

- Providers are authorized to write necessary prescriptions to facilitate reduced dosages of hormones to support up to 6-12 weeks of tapering.
- **Any requests to extend 6–12-week timeline must obtain DHA review and approval.**
- **Behavioral health (BH) treatment** for gender dysphoria, including all levels of care above outpatient, remains covered and authorized for both service members and other beneficiaries. [4]
- Psychotherapy for gender dysphoria treatment and psychotherapy for beneficiaries pursuing transition are covered.
- Consistent with mental health treatment for other diagnoses, outpatient, office-based, mental health visits shall not require a referral or preauthorization.
- Consistent with mental health treatment for other disorders, outpatient, office-based, mental health visits do not require a referral or pre-authorization. However, some ADSMs may require a military Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) referral/authorization or a Specified Authorized Staff (SAS) preauthorization before receiving non-emergency health care services. [1]
- Treatment conferences (CPT codes 99366, 99367, and 99368) may be covered. [1]
- Referral and authorization are required for continuation of behavioral health treatments and for initiation of medical treatments of and a medical necessity review is required for all referrals. [1]

Initial Request

Initial Level of Review may approve the following treatment in accordance with time frames and medical necessity requirements below:

- **Behavioral Health Diagnosis and Treatment** will be approved for 180 days active duty referrals for the following (**note**: referrals only required for ADSMs, all other beneficiaries do not require a referral or preauthorization consistent without mental health outpatient treatments):
 - Psychotherapy for gender dysphoria and psychotherapy rendered for patients pursuing transition.

Subsequent Visits

- **Initial Level of Review** may approve an additional 180 days of continued Behavioral Health or Endocrine Treatment for continued maintenance including [1]:
 - Psychotherapy continuation for gender dysphoria and psychotherapy rendered for beneficiaries pursuing transition (e.g., during Real Life Experience) if the beneficiary is responding to treatment and the treating provider documents a need for continued care.
 - Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy continuation if responding to hormone treatment and the treating provider documents a need for continued care.

DEFINITION

Gender Dysphoria—a condition where a person experiences clinically significant distress, or impairment in social, occupational, or other important area of functioning, of at least six months duration, because of a marked incongruence between the gender assigned, usually at birth (i.e., natal sex) and their experienced/expressed gender identity. The clinic definition is provided in the Diagnostic and Statistical



Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), Fifth Edition. Diagnosis is made using the most current edition of the DSM. Though gender dysphoria often begins in childhood, some people may not experience it until after puberty or much later.

CODES

REFERENCES

[1] TRICARE Policy Manual 6010.63-M, April 2021, Change 16, (September 13, 2024), Chapter 7, Section 1.3, Gender Dysphoria and Gender Affirming Health Care for Dates of Service on or after July 1, 2022.

https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-01-08/AsOf/TPT5/C7S1_3.html

[2] TRICARE Operations Manual 6010.62-M, April 2021, Change 10, (June 24, 2024), Chapter 18, Section 9, Referral and Appointing Center (RAC) Pilot) <https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-01-17/AsOf/TOT5/C18S9.html>

[3] TRICARE Policy Manual 6010.63-M, April 2021, Change 7, (July 17, 2024), Chapter 4, Section 15.1, Male Genital System https://manuals.health.mil/pages/DisplayManualHtmlFile/2025-01-08/AsOf/TPT5/C4S15_1.html

[4] Defense Health Agency. (2025, February 21). Pause of Medical Procedures Associated with Affirming or Facilitating a Gender Transition for Service Members. Falls Church, VA: Defense Health Agency, <https://www.health.mil/Reference-Center/DHA-Publications/2023/05/12/DHA-PI-6015-21>

[5] Defense Health Agency (2025, April 21). Additional Guidance on Treatment of Gender Dysphoria in Minors

[6] Defense Health Agency (2025, May 19). Additional Guidance on Treatment of Gender Dysphoria for Service Members (Reference No. HT940223C0002, TRICARE MCSC, West Region) [Memorandum]. TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp.

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