

Gender-Affirming Services in Newfoundland

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



FOREWARD

Gender-affirming medical services are available and accessible in Newfoundland & Labrador. 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, The Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Care Plan (MCP). 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 Quebec 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

We thank you for your efforts in providing appropriate and informed care!

– *The Canadian Queer Medical Students Association (CQMSA)*

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For the Canadian Queer Medical Students Association

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PROVINCIAL HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

In Newfoundland and Labrador, coverage is offered under the [Medical Care Plan \(MCP\)](#). The MCP is a comprehensive medical care insurance plan designed to cover the cost of physician services for residents of the province.

Beneficiaries of the MCP must be residents of the province to be eligible for coverage. According to the Newfoundland and Labrador Medical Care and Hospital Insurance Act, a resident is defined as someone who “is lawfully entitled to be or to remain in Canada, makes his or her [or their] home in the province, and is ordinarily present in the province but does not include a tourist, transient or visitor to the province”.

Applicants seeking coverage will be required to present differing documentation, depending on which of the four basic applicant categories they fall under: Canadian citizen, permanent resident, international worker, or international post-secondary student. All international applicants must be prepared to present a valid passport for identification purposes.

To view comprehensive eligibility criteria or to apply for coverage, please visit [Medical Care Plan \(MCP\) - Health and Community Services](#).

NAME AND GENDER MARKER CHANGES

Changing Legal Identity Markers

Having identification documents (IDs) that match your gender identity and gender expression is an important part of being able to participate in society safely, with dignity and privacy. Below you will find details about any application criteria, forms, supporting documentation, and fees for making these changes.

Trans Support NL, a non-profit organization offering support to the trans community of Newfoundland and Labrador, created a comprehensive infographic detailing the process of changing legal identity markers. It can be found [here](#).

TRANSITIONING IN NL

CHANGING YOUR NAME AND GENDER MARKER

TRANS SUPPORT NL

1	LEGAL NAME - VITAL STATISTICS Requirements: • Birth certificate in the old name • Appropriate application forms • Be a resident of NL for at least 3 months	\$	Costs: \$100 (+ \$30-\$35 for new birth certificate)	
2	GENDER MARKER - VITAL STATISTICS Requirements: • Any birth certificates with previous marker • Appropriate application forms and documents • Born in Newfoundland	\$	Costs: No fee (+ \$30-\$35 for new birth certificate)	
3	MCP - GOVERNMENT OF NL Requirements: • Legal name change certificate • Appropriate application forms	\$	Costs: No fee	
4	SIN - GOVERNMENT OF CANADA Requirements: • Primary identity and legal status document • Secondary document to confirm identity • Legal name certificate • Appropriate application forms	\$	Costs: No fee	
5	PASSPORT - GOVERNMENT OF CANADA Requirements: • Previous passport (if applicable) • Birth certificate in the new name/gender • Legal name certificate • Appropriate application forms	\$	Costs: \$120 (5 year) \$160 (10 year)	Name  Gender 

OTHER AREAS TO CONSIDER

- Educational institutions
- Employers and insurance providers
- Banks and financial institutions
- Utility providers
- Gyms and Recreation facilities

Find more information at tsnl.org/transition-nl

Trans Support NL 2022

Name Change

Legal name change can be conducted using online forms found [here](#), or at any Vital Statistics location. You will be required to present a birth certificate with the old name alongside your application. A fee of \$100.00 will be collected for the name change, and \$30.00 for a new birth certificate. All changes of surname must be published in the Newfoundland gazette with exceptions only provided under specific circumstances.

Patients under 16 years of age will need a parent or legal guardian to apply for name change on their behalf. If you are new to the province, you must have been a resident of Newfoundland and Labrador for at least 3 months prior to changing your name in the province.

Sex Indicator/Gender Marker Change

Legal change of gender can also be carried out by visiting a Vital Statistics location or by downloading forms online, found [here](#). There is no cost for a change of gender designation, but a fee of \$30.00 will be required for issuance of a new birth certificate after the change is approved. Legal change of gender can only be requested for those patients who were born in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Similar to legal name changes, only patients above 16 years of age will be able to apply for a gender change on their own. Alongside the completed application form, patients over 16 years will need to submit a written statement that the applicant has “assumed, identifies with and intends to maintain the gender identity that corresponds with the change requested”.

Documentation required for a patient under 16 years old includes the application form completed by a parent or guardian, as well as written consent to the change from the patient’s second parent/guardian. Written consent from the patient themselves will be required if they are between 12 and 15 years old. The parent or guardian will need to provide a written statement that the patient “has assumed, identifies with and intends to maintain the gender identity that corresponds with the change requested”. Patients under 16 years old will require a letter of support for the change from a health professional, and patients under 12 years old will require another letter of support from a second health professional. Qualified health professionals for these letters include a physician, psychologist, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, or social worker.

A gender marker ‘X’ is available. The government of Newfoundland and Labrador expresses that they cannot guarantee that identification with this marker will be recognized by other authorities.

Information about changing personal information on your driver's license can be found [here](#).

MEDICATION

Age of Medical Consent

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the age of medical consent is the same as the age of majority (19 years old). However, like many Canadian provinces and territories, Newfoundland and Labrador follow 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 is wanting 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, this provider may decide that the minor is not capable of making this decision alone. Since 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

Hormone therapy is an important part of gender-affirming care which promotes physiologic masculinization/feminization for people experiencing gender incongruence. The decision to start hormone 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 hormone 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 for folks Assigned Female at Birth (AFAB), estrogen for folks Assigned Male at Birth (AMAB), and hormone blockers.

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

It is recommended that patients contact their family physician to initiate hormone therapy.

Coverage for Prescription Drugs in Newfoundland & Labrador

NL Prescription Drug Program (NLPDP)

[The Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program](#) (NLPDP) provides financial assistance for the purchase of eligible prescription medications for those who reside in the province. There are 5 different drug plans that each have their own requirements, detailed [here](#). The application form is found [here](#).

Medication	Commercial Name	Type	Dose Strength
Androgens (AFAB)			
Danazol	Cyclomen	Capsules	50 mg
			100 mg
			200 mg
Testosterone	AndroGel	Topical gel	1% (2.5g)
	Taro-Testosterone Gel		
	AndroGel		1% (5.0g)
	Taro-Testosterone Gel		
	Testim 1%		
Testosterone cypionate	Depo-Testosterone	Injectable solution	100mg/mL, 10mL
	Taro-Testosterone Cypionate		100mg/10mL, 10mL
Testosterone enanthate	Delatestryl	Injectable solution	200mg/mL, 5mL
Gonadotropins ("puberty blockers")			
Nafarelin	Synarel	Nasal nebulizer	2mg/mL, 8 mL
Estrogens (AMAB)			
17β-Estradiol	EstroGel	Gel transdermal	0.06%
	Divigel	Gel transdermal	0.25mg
			0.5mg
			1mg
	Estring	Vaginal ring	2mg
	Climara	Transdermal patch	25mcg
			50mcg
			75mcg
	Estradot	Transdermal patch	25mcg
			37.5mcg

			50mcg
			75mcg
			100mcg
	Sandoz	Transdermal patch	50mcg
			75mcg
			100mcg
	Estrace	Tablet	0.5mg
			1.0mg
			2.0mg
	Lupin-Estradiol	Tablet	0.5mg
			1.0mg
			2.0mg
Vagifem 10	Vaginal suppository	10mcg	
Conjugated estrogen	Premarin	Vaginal cream	0.625mg/g, 30g
		Tablet	0.3mg
			0.625mg
			1.25mg
Estrone	Estragyn vaginal cream	Vaginal cream	1mg/g, 45g
Anti-Androgens			
Spironolactone	Aldactone	Tablet	25mg
			100mg
	Jamp Spironolactone	Tablet	25mg
			100mg
	Teva-Spironolactone	Tablet	25mg
	Teva-Spiroton	Tablet	100mg
	Mint-Spirozine	Tablet	25mg
			100mg
Eplerenone	Inspra	Tablet	25mg
			50mg
	Mint-Eplerenone	Tablet	25mg
			50mg
Testosterone blocker			
Dutasteride	Various	Tablet	0.5mg
Finasteride	Various	Tablet	5mg

Source: [NLPDP Drug Product Database](#)

Gender-Affirming Services

Several gender affirming medical procedures are eligible for coverage under the Medical Care Plan (MCP) in Newfoundland. In order to be eligible, the procedure must be listed under the “What's Covered” list by MCP, and prior approval must be obtained. A list of procedures and a detailed outline of the request for prior approval can be found [here](#). While some gender affirming medical procedures are accessible in Newfoundland, it is important to note that some surgeries are not available in the province. MCP will provide coverage for surgeries performed at public facilities, however a private Canadian facility may be approved if there are no alternatives.

Below is a table conveying information about gender-affirming services, including whether the service or procedure is covered by MCP, the criteria required for approval, and names of organizations and clinics who can provide these services.

All government related forms and information sheets can be found [here](#)
Additional comprehensive information by Trans Support NL can be found [here](#)

Treatment/Service	Insurance Coverage	Criteria for Approval	Providers
Gender-Affirming Products	No	N/A	TransSupport NL has a binder request program https://tsnl.org/ Prude -- Gender Inclusive Sex Shop in St. John's https://www.facebook.com/prude.prude.prude/
Fertility Treatments	Yes	Referrals can be completed and forwarded by a family physician, other medical doctors or a nurse practitioner	Newfoundland & Labrador Fertility Services (NLFS) https://cwhep.easternhealth.ca/womens-health/fertility-services/
Electrolysis/Hair Removal	No	N/A	<u>St. John's</u> : Queer-Friendly private electrolysis can be accessed at DermaEnvy Skincare https://www.dermaenvy.com/transgendersupportprogram
Feminizing or Masculinizing Voice Therapy	Yes	Referral from GP	<u>St. John's</u> : Miller Centre (with Speech Language Pathologist) https://adultrehab.easternhealth.ca/rehabilitation-services/outpatient-rehabilitation/single-outpatient-rehabilitation/speech-language-pathology/
Psychologist	Yes, if through public system	Referrals can be made to the Clinical Sexology Program by any health-care professional.	<u>St. John's</u> : Krista Benson (Clinical Sexologist) https://mha.easternhealth.ca/adults/clinical-sexuality/

Treatment/Service	Insurance Coverage	Criteria for Approval	Providers
Medications			
Hormone Blockers	Yes	Depending on what NLPDP program a person falls under, how much of it is funded can vary	<u>St. John's</u> : Dr Mari-Lynne Sinnott at Proactive https://www.proactivewp.ca/ropewalklane <u>Corner Brook</u> : Dr Amy Pieroway <u>Labrador</u> : Dr Kathryn Versteeg
Gender Affirming Hormone Therapy	Yes	Depending on what NLPDP program a person falls under, how much of it is funded can vary	<u>St. John's</u> : Dr Mari-Lynne Sinnott at Proactive https://www.proactivewp.ca/ropewalklane <u>Corner Brook</u> : Dr Amy Pieroway <u>Labrador (Goose Bay)</u> : Dr Kathryn Versteeg
Surgeries			
AFAB Top Surgeries			
Breast Reduction	No	Only mastectomy is covered	
Chest Masculinization	Yes	One surgical readiness assessment by mental health professional who has also completed surgical readiness assessor certification and recommendation form	See Mastectomy section below
Mastectomy	Yes	One surgical readiness assessment by mental health professional who has also completed surgical readiness assessor certification and recommendation form	MCP Criteria: Has to be performed by a surgeon in a publicly funded facility, in a province or territory that covers it for the same reason and is willing/able to accept the NL consult. NB is often where people travel, but you can go to any publicly funded facility and provider
AFAB Bottom Surgeries - Removal			
Hysterectomy	Yes	Two surgical readiness assessments with assessor certification. 12 continuous months of gender affirming hormone therapy (GAHT) as appropriate to gender identity (unless contraindicated)	In province

Oophorectomy	Yes	Two surgical readiness assessments with assessor certification and recommendation forms. 12 continuous months of GAHT as appropriate to gender identity (unless contraindicated)	In Province
AFAB Bottom Surgeries - Construction			
Metoidioplasty	Yes	Two surgical readiness assessments with two attached certifications and recommendation forms. 12 continuous months of GAHT as appropriate to gender identity (unless contraindicated) AND 12 continuous months of living in a gender expression that is congruent with their gender identity	GRS Montreal
Phalloplasty	Yes	Two surgical readiness assessments with two attached certifications and recommendation forms. 12 continuous months of GAHT as appropriate to gender identity (unless contraindicated) AND 12 continuous months of living in a gender expression that is congruent with their gender identity	GRS Montreal
AMAB Facial Surgeries			
Facial Feminization Surgery	No	N/A	
Tracheal Shaving	No	N/A	
AMAB Top Surgery			
Breast Augmentation	Technically yes, but must have no breast development (breast aplasia) after 18 consecutive months of hormone therapy	As breast aplasia is rare, those who need surgery to feminize chest are often rejected.	<i>Community perspective:</i> If one was to qualify, they could technically get it done in the province (an NL plastic surgeon has performed breast augmentation for trans women who paid out of pocket) or at a publicly funded facility and provider.
AMAB Bottom Surgeries - Removal			
Orchiectomy	Yes	Two surgical readiness assessments with assessor certification. 12 continuous months of GAHT as appropriate to gender identity (unless contraindicated)	Typically performed as part of vaginoplasty at GRS.
Penectomy	Yes	See orchiectomy	Typically performed as part of vaginoplasty at GRS.

AMAB Bottom Surgeries - Construction			
Labiaplasty	Yes	See vaginoplasty	GRS Montreal
Vaginoplasty	Yes	Two surgical readiness assessments with two attached certifications and recommendation forms. 12 continuous months of GAHT as appropriate to gender identity (unless contraindicated) AND 12 continuous months of living in a gender expression that is congruent with their gender identity	GRS Montreal
Vulvoplasty	Yes	See vaginoplasty	GRS Montreal

RESOURCES

Gender-Inclusive Clinics and Resources

- This helpful document contains an extensive list of various Queer resources in Newfoundland. It can be found [here](#).
- This guide contains additional Queer resources in Newfoundland, including region specific resources. It can be found [here](#).
- Trans Support NL is an active community resource in Newfoundland. More information can be found [here](#).
- The Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre provides a clinic, supporting counseling, peer support and many other services. More information can be found [here](#).

Youth Services

- The Gender wellness clinic supports transgender and non-binary children, youth and their families throughout their childhood. More information can be found [here](#).
- Various Queer youth camps including Camp Eclipse, Camp Ohana and Camp Rainbow. More information can be found [here](#).
- Trans Youth NL provides support for trans, Two-Spirit, non-binary, and gender-questioning youth and for parents of trans, Two-Spirit, and gender diverse offspring throughout Newfoundland & Labrador. More information can be found [here](#).