



## Gender Pre-Surgical Assessments: Introduction and FAQ's

The San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) established Gender Health SF to provide access, education and preparation to gender-related procedures for adult transgender San Francisco residents. The Gender Pre-Surgical Assessment Form is a working collaboration between Gender Health SF, insurance, collaborating clinics, and patients. It is designed to:

1. Structure a comprehensive assessment that will inform how to most effectively educate, prepare and coordinate patients seeking gender-related procedures,
2. Encourage providers to obtain informed consent for surgical intervention, and
3. Assist providers in assessing if surgical intervention to treat Gender Dysphoria is the most effective and appropriate treatment.

### **How to complete this form:**

Gender Pre-Surgical Assessments are required to be completed or authorized by a licensed mental health provider. If you are unlicensed, a licensed mental health professional needs to authorize your assessment by meeting with the patient at least once, reviewing and signing the assessment.

For clients seeking gender procedures that have higher complication risks and/or will result in complete sterilization, such as Vaginoplasty, Hysterectomy or Phalloplasty, assessments by two separate licensed mental health providers are required. For all other gender procedures, such as Facial Feminization Surgery, assessment by one licensed mental health provider will suffice.

Due to the wide array of gender procedures available and uniqueness of every patient's needs, not all questions are applicable. Please note "Not applicable" when appropriate.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

1. Why is hormone replacement therapy treatment history (Question 3) relevant?  
In accordance with WPATH Standards of Care and in order for the GHSF and insurance to authorize certain gender procedures, hormone replacement therapy must be ruled out as an effective medical treatment of Gender Dysphoria. For example, some individuals find that 1 year on hormone replacement therapy develops enough breast tissue growth that surgical intervention is not needed.
2. What does "informed consent" (Question 5) mean?  
Informed consent in practice is a provider offering the potential risks, benefits, and alternatives to a proposed treatment to a client. Informed consent is shaped by a client's capacity to understand and integrate this information to make informed decisions.
3. I am completing an assessment only for Facial Hair Reduction. Do I need to complete an entire Pre-Surgical Assessment?  
No. Please answer Questions #1 - #10.
4. What is medical necessity and how is medical necessity determined?



All procedures, services and items covered by insurance must be deemed reasonable and necessary for the treatment of a diagnosis and/or injury. Gender Health SF collaborates with insurance and references WPATH Standards of Care to determine if the treatment requested (gender procedure) is the most reasonable and necessary treatment to treat the patient's diagnosis (Gender Dysphoria). If your assessment does not meet medical necessity by insurance standards, Gender Health SF will contact you to revise your assessment.

5. Where can I learn more about gender care and assessments?

Gender Health SF offers Gender Pre-Surgical Assessment trainings, as well as surgery-specific provider trainings. Please contact GHSF to be added to our provider mailing list. Also, every 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month at South Van Ness Adult Behavioral Health Services, 755 South Van Ness, San Francisco, CA, is a Gender Case Consultation group, open to all SFDPH employees and SFDPH-contract employees. If you fit neither criteria and are interested in joining, please contact GHSF.

**Important information:**

To promote best possible outcomes and encourage remaining in care, assessments are reviewed not only to authorize surgery consultation, but surgery date. Assessments expire after 1 year. Your assessment may authorize consultation but expire before surgery date due to wait list status. If this is the case, you may be contacted to update your original Assessment.

Additionally, surgery authorization denials and surgery date cancellations often cause significant distress for clients. If you have additional questions, Gender Health SF offers clinical consultation to support providers in completing effective assessments.