TRANS CARE BC
Provincial Health Services Authority

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Gender-affirming Care for Trans, Two-Spirit, and Gender Diverse Patients in BC:

A Primary Care Toolkit

Contents

Indigenous people and Two-Spirit considerations

As a provincial program, Trans Care BC operates on the traditional and ancestral land of many Indigenous peoples, and we provide services to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people who live in diverse settings and communities across BC. Trans Care BC's main office is located on the traditional and ancestral territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

With the use of this guide, it is important to note that historical and ongoing colonialism and racism can affect and interrupt Indigenous people's identities, and their ability to access care.

Impact of colonization

In BC, land was taken from Indigenous peoples and many were then forced onto reserves and into residential schools. This colonization harmed Indigenous peoples and their communities in many ways, including causing infectious disease epidemics, repression and criminalization of traditional healing practices, segregation through Indian hospitals and in some cases denial of health services. The impacts of these harms have been shared and experienced from generation to generation. Because of this, the current health care system may be experienced as inaccessible and possibly harmful to Indigenous people, preventing them from receiving safe and respectful care.

The spiritual and cultural beliefs of Indigenous people were also impacted by colonial religious belief systems that condemned sexual and gender diversity. Some of the lasting impacts of colonialism have been an increase in homophobia and transphobia in Indigenous communities, often forcing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer (LGBTQ) and Two-Spirit people to leave their home communities.

Two-Spirit

The term "Two-Spirit" was created by a group of LGBTQ Indigenous community members in 1990 at the third annual Inter-tribal Native American, First Nations, Gay and Lesbian American Conference held in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is a term currently used within some Indigenous communities to encompass sexual, gender, cultural and spiritual identity. Two-Spirit reflects complex Indigenous views of gender roles and the long history of sexual and gender diversity in many Indigenous communities. Individual terms and roles for Two-Spirit people are specific to each community. The term Two-Spirit is only to be used for Indigenous people, due to the cultural and spiritual context, however, not all Indigenous people who hold diverse sexual and gender identities consider themselves to be Two-Spirit.

Providing care

It is the role of all health care providers to ensure that the care they deliver is responsive to the needs of their patients. For Indigenous patients, this includes being considerate of the ways that colonization and racism have shaped their relationship with the health care system. It's important to take time to understand and reflect on the ways we may need to evolve and adapt our own practice in order to create a welcoming, inclusive and affirming care experience for Indigenous patients and their families.

Learn more about Indigenous peoples and tools that you can use for effective communication and relationship building through the San'yas Core Indigenous Cultural Safety Health Training - https://sanyas.ca/courses/british-columbia/core-ics-health.

The San'yas training was designed for health professionals working in the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), regional health authorities, Ministry of Health and partner agencies in BC.

Trans Care BC staff are committed to meaningful, respectful and accountable collaboration with Indigenous communities, and trans and Two-Spirit peoples. We acknowledge gender diversity and Two-Spirit people in Indigenous communities prior to colonization and we are working to understand the perspectives and needs of trans and Two-Spirit Indigenous peoples. Trans Care BC is building relationships with Indigenous communities in BC through community engagement sessions in all five regional health authorities. For these engagement sessions, Trans Care BC has partnered with Two-Spirit content experts and community organizers, as well as the First Nations Health Authority, BC Association of Friendship Centres, and VCH Aboriginal Health and Prevention teams.

Acknowledgment of the primary care working group

Trans Care BC would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the Primary Care Working Group (PCWG) to the development of this toolkit. The PCWG brought together clinicians with extensive collective experience providing care to trans, Two-Spirit and gender diverse patients. Members came from diverse practice settings, rural and urban communities, and were cis and trans identified people. We thank them for sharing their knowledge and time and for their ongoing dedication to improving access to respectful and dignified health care for trans, Two-Spirit and gender diverse people.

Disclaimer

The PCWG was comprised of family physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses who have expertise in trans care by virtue of the volumes of patients they have seen and the care they have managed. This Primary Care toolkit has been developed not as a standard of care but rather as a general guide to assist clinicians who are or may be taking on similar work. The toolkit does not represent an exhaustive review of the medical literature, although many research articles and other protocols have been reviewed to inform the medical aspects of care.

Trans Care BC assumes no responsibility or liability for any harm, damage or other losses, direct or indirect, resulting from reliance on the use or the misuse of any information contained in this toolkit.

Introduction

Transgender people are an underserved population who continue to face societal stigma and discrimination in many areas including health care settings. They are disproportionately affected by poverty, homelessness, unemployment, and health problems such as depression, substance use disorders, and HIV. As primary care providers, nurse practitioners (NPs) and family physicians (GPs) are uniquely well positioned to address these health disparities and increase access to gender-affirming health care. Historically, transgender care was provided in highly specialized gender clinics, but in the last decade there has been a shift toward distributed care models. In Canada and the US, there is increasing recognition that trans people can be well-served in primary care settings and that with some additional training, GPs and NPs can provide many aspects of gender-affirming care. Trans people have the right to respectful, dignified, gender-affirming health care in their home communities, and enhancing your skills and providing gender-affirming care in your practice can have a profound impact on the health of trans people in your community.

This Primary Care Toolkit is intended to support GPs and NPs who are relatively new to providing care to gender diverse people. It includes some basic information about gender-affirming care options and tools to assist with initiating and/or maintaining hormone therapy. It also directs you to further reading and provides suggestions for where you can access support from more experienced clinicians. This toolkit has been informed by the collective clinical expertise of the members of our Primary Care Working Group and by existing guidelines from Canada and the US.

Our website (**www.transcarebc.ca**) lists comprehensive resources as they become available, including foundational and CME-accredited online training modules. For care providers and staff who are new to working with gender diverse clients, we recommend the online training module **Intro to Gender Diversity**.

The content in this toolkit has been created with an adult patient population in mind and it should be noted that assessment and treatment of gender dysphoria for youth requires appropriate training, family engagement (whenever possible) and awareness of developmental and mental well-being considerations. While some youth are safely served in a primary care setting, others require specialist support and care. Trans Care BC is working with BC Children's Hospital and other stakeholders to improve access to care and support for gender creative and trans youth, children and their families. Future training opportunities, clinical resources and tools will be available to support clinicians engaged in this work. For resources and information about care for trans young people and families, see the BC Children's Hospital Endocrine Clinic **www.bcchildrens.ca/our-services/clinics/gender** and Trans Care BC website **www.transcarebc.ca**.

Gender-affirming health care options

Gender-affirming health care must be individualized according to a patient's goals and can involve many different aspects of social, medical, and surgical care. The care we provide is intended to relieve gender dysphoria. This has many benefits, including improved mental and physical health and improved social and occupational function.

> *Gender dysphoria refers to discomfort or distress that is caused by a discrepancy between a person's gender identity and that person's sex assigned at birth (and the associated gender role and/or primary and secondary sex characteristics) WPATH SOC v7*

Discomfort related to gender may present at any age. Medical care, offered in a staged approach, may be appropriate for some individuals following the onset of puberty. Primary care providers are encouraged to to work collaboratively with more advanced practice clinicians when caring for trans youth, especially when new to this area of practice. Please see the section on working with trans youth for more information about caring for younger patients.

Primary care providers have an important role to play in discussing gender identity and gender health goals with patients and providing gender-affirming care or referrals for gender-affirming care. The options outlined in this guide are appropriate for individuals with binary (identifying as male or female) and non-binary identities (identifying as a blend of male and female or identifying as neither male nor female), and individuals may require some, all, or none of these options.

Social options

Some trans people look to their primary care providers for support with non-medical and non-surgical aspects of gender affirmation. Some examples include assisting patients with name and identity changes (see **www.transcarebc.ca** for more info), education about safer **chest-binding** or **genital tucking**, or counselling about common concerns such as coming out to friends and family or coping with transphobia.

Medical options

Medical care may involve the use of a progesterone-releasing IUD or medroxyprogesterone (Depo-Provera®) for suppression of monthly bleeding, leuprorelin (Lupron®) for puberty suppression, electrolysis for hair removal or hormone therapy.

Surgical options

Surgical care may include chest or breast surgery, gonadectomy, genital reconstruction, and a range of other procedures, including tracheal shave and facial surgery.

Visit the **surgery page at www.transcarebc.ca** for information on:

- gender-affirming surgeries
- how to refer a patient for gender-affirming surgery
- health navigation guides to help patients access and prepare for surgery

Role of the primary care provider:

- Provide an inclusive clinical environment where patients will feel safe talking about their gender
    - Resource: Creating Accessible Environments for Gender Diverse People: An Organizational Assessment Tool for Health Care and Support Services: www.transcarebc.ca/sites/default/files/2024-05/Organizational_Assessment_Tool.pdf
- Respect your patient's right to self-determine their gender identity
- Maintain a gender-affirming approach, including using chosen names and pronouns when interacting with, on behalf of, or when charting on your patient
- Be prepared to discuss gender and the range of gender-affirming health care options available
- Discuss current supports and plans for navigating transition in relationships, work or school settings and offer support and resources
- Assist patients to change their name and identification documents if desired (see www.transcarebc.ca for more info)
- Be prepared to work with families, partners and significant others to nurture and sustain supportive relationships, especially when working with youth
- Work to stabilize any physical or mental health conditions to ensure they do not pose barriers to the patient accessing gender-affirming interventions such as hormones or surgery
- Seek to restore or build capacity where it is diminished to ensure it does not pose a barrier to patient's ability to provide informed consent
- For patients seeking hormone therapy:
    - Complete care planning in preparation for hormone therapy or refer to someone who will
    - Initiate hormone therapy or refer to someone who will
    - Provide monitoring related to hormone therapy as needed
- For patients seeking surgical interventions:
    - Be familiar with the WPATH criteria for surgical intervention(s)
    - Complete care planning for surgery (if eligible) or refer to someone who can
    - Refer for surgery, provide post-op care and/or liaise with surgeons as needed

Help is available for primary care providers who would like to support a trans patient with gender-affirming care but are unsure how to help – to access the Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise (RACE) Line, please call **604-696-2131** or toll free at **1-877-696-2131** and request the Transgender Health option.

Care planning for medical or surgical interventions

Primary care providers are well positioned to support patients with care planning for gender-affirming interventions such as hormone therapy or surgery. Along with confirming a diagnosis of gender incongruence, there are a number of preparatory steps needed to ensure treatment is indicated and provided in the safest manner possible. Assessment by a psychologist or psychiatrist is not required for most people, however the primary care provider should assess both mental and physical health as part of care planning and refer to appropriate specialists as needed. Care planning often takes place over a number of visits depending on the length of time available per visit, the clinical situation and the experience of the clinician. Please refer to Appendix A for sample questions that you can use to explore gender and gender-affirming goals with your clients.

The purpose of these visits is to ensure your patient is ready from a medical and psychosocial perspective to proceed with treatment. This is ideally done within a primary care setting using a gender-affirming, informed consent based approach. The checklist on the next page covers the important considerations and steps involved in care planning for medical or surgical interventions.

Care planning for medical or surgical interventions:

- ☐ Review gender identity and experience of gender incongruence (see Appendix A)
- ☐ Discuss overall gender-affirmation goals (immediate, long-term, etc.)
- ☐ Discuss hopes & expectations of proposed treatment(s)
- ☐ Confirm diagnosis of gender incongruence and exclude rare differential diagnoses (e.g. delusional disorder, body dysmorphic disorder)
- ☐ General medical intake (complete medical history, family history etc.)
- ☐ Review of relevant health records
- ☐ Physical exam (where appropriate)

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Care planning for medical or surgical interventions:

- [ ] Discuss contraindictions & risk mitigation
- [ ] Discuss treatment in detail, including permanence, potential benefits, risks & complications
- [ ] Discuss the following where applicable: potential impacts on chest feeding, fertility, need for contraception & other sexual considerations
- [ ] Confirm patient has the capacity to consent to the proposed treatment(s)
- [ ] Review relevant patient handouts & resources
- [ ] Review recommendations for monitoring and health screening
- [ ] Discuss support system(s), planning related to work or school & housing
- [ ] Refer for counselling or peer support when desired (not required but can be very beneficial)
- [ ] Discuss potential costs

Hormone therapy

- [ ] Baseline blood work
- [ ] Review potential side effects
- [ ] Review and sign consent form(s) (see Appendices B, C & D)
- [ ] Apply for Special Authority as appropriate

Surgery

- [ ] Review potential need for revisions
- [ ] Complete the relevant Surgical Recommendation form or refer for surgical care planning (see page 12-14)
- [ ] Complete the surgical referral (see pages 12-14)

Overview of testosterone-based hormone therapy

Testosterone is used to reduce estrogen-related features, induce testosterone-related features and relieve gender-related distress.

There is variation in practice among clinicians regarding dosing for hormone initiation, hormone maintenance and ordering labwork, and much of the decision-making depends on the clinical situation. Care providers may use eCase or call the RACE Line at 604-696-2131 or toll free at 1-877-696-2131 and request the "Transgender Health" option to consult an experienced clinician.

Medication	Dose instructions
Testosterone	
Testosterone cypionate 100mg/mL (injectable, suspended in cottonseed oil) **Testosterone enanthate 200mg/mL** (injectable, suspended in sesame oil)	Starting dose: 25 mg IM or SC q weekly Usual maintenance dose: 50-100 mg weekly If local skin reaction occurs, switch oils Weekly dosing is preferred to minimize peak/trough variation Biweekly injection (of 2x the weekly dose) may be tolerated in some individuals
Androgel® 1% (gel) 12.5 mg/pump or 25mg/2.5g or 50 mg/5g packet	Starting dose: 2 pumps or 1 x 2.5 g packet (25 mg daily) Usual maintenance dose: 4-8 pumps or 1-2 x 5 g packet (50-100 mg daily)
Progestins: May be used for contraception or to assist with suppression of monthly bleeding (menses)	
Medroxyprogesterone IM (Depo-Provera®)	150 mg IM q 12 weeks
Progesterone releasing IUD Higher dose progesterone preferred for suppression of monthly bleeding (menses)	Inserted by MD or NP. Devices effective for 3-5 years
Progestin implant (Nexplanon®)	Inserted sub-dermally by trained MD, NP or RN(C), effective up to 3 years

It is important to review risks, benefits and potential side effects with patients prior to initiating treatment. Sample consent forms are included in this package – see Appendix B for the Testosterone Consent form.

Risk considerations: Contraindications to testosterone therapy may include unstable cardiovascular disease, pregnancy or chest/breast feeding, unstable psychosis or mania, active hormone-sensitive cancer and allergy. Many patients choose to begin or continue hormone therapy in spite of contraindications or higher risks. In such cases, care providers should do a careful informed consent process that takes into consideration the capacity of the patient to make an informed decision and the significant harm that can come from withholding treatment. Care providers may use eCase or call the RACE Line at **604-696-2131** or toll free at **1-877-696-2131** and request the "Transgender Health" option to consult an experienced clinician.

Dose Titration: Titrate dose q 4-6 weeks until maintenance dose is achieved (e.g. 25 mg x 4-6 weeks, then 50 mg x 4-6 weeks, then 75 mg, etc.) A slower titration rate may be preferred by some patients or may be chosen based on clinical indication.

Injectable route: Although the drug monographs state that vials of injectable hormones should be discarded within 28 days of initial use, this is not practical for a variety of reasons. Instead of disposing vials at 28 days, many providers advise:

- follow clean technique
- use strategies to minimize vial coring, including using the smallest appropriate gauge needles to draw up medication and
- monitor the vial for contamination or breakdown of the rubber stopper

If any signs of contamination are noted, it is recommended to discard the vial.

Goal of therapy: To maintain mid-injection cycle levels in the mid - high end of male range, minimize side effects and maintain expected rates of physical change (degree of change is influenced in part by patient preference).

Lab monitoring:

Request the lab to report male reference ranges

Baseline and annually thereafter	• Testosterone, CBC, ALT, fasting glucose, lipids
Following dose changes and 4-6 weeks after gonadectomy	• Mid-injection cycle testosterone, CBC, ALT • Trough testosterone if amenorrhea is delayed >6 months

Areas for review in follow up visits:

Subjective	Objective
■ Effects of hormones: physical, emotional ■ Current dose/desire for dose change ■ Side effects/concerns ■ Mental health: mood, body image, libido ■ Social: significant others, support, acceptance, safety, housing, finances ■ Lifestyle: exercise, nutrition, smoking, substance use	■ Blood pressure ■ Weight (baseline and q 6 months prn) ■ Mental status (brief assessment) ■ Cardiovascular and abdominal exam (baseline and yearly) ■ Labs ■ Other investigations as indicated

Managing side effects of testosterone, screening & health promotion

Managing side effects of testosterone & other common concerns	
Acne	Typically most problematic in the first year of hormone therapy Treat as per usual, consider lower dose or switching testosterone type if persistent
Scalp hair loss	Minoxidil – will not impact facial hair growth Finasteride – will inhibit facial hair growth
Polycythemia	Usually a misinterpretation due to lab using "female" ranges. Ensure the hemoglobin and hematocrit are being interpreted based on male laboratory ranges. If hemoglobin > 175 g/L or hematocrit > 0.52 or if symptomatic (headaches, facial flushing) increase frequency of dosing to weekly, reduce dose, or switch to a patch or gel to minimize peak/trough variation
Elevated transaminases	Usually transient unless another cause of hepatic dysfunction is identified
Unexpected (menstrual/cyclical) bleeding	Bleeding is typically suppressed within 6 months of starting testosterone. Evaluate for missed, inconsistent or excessive testosterone dosing (missed or inconsistent doses can cause spotting, excess testosterone can convert to estrogen with theoretical risk of endometrial proliferation) Check trough testosterone levels, estradiol, LH, FSH. Consider more frequent dosing (weekly at half the q 2 week dose) or dose adjustment. Persistent, unexplained bleeding should be evaluated with pelvic ultrasound +/- endometrial biopsy
Internal genital (vaginal) dryness	Internal genital atrophy is fairly common for those on long-term testosterone. It can be treated with over-the-counter internal genital moisturizers or topical estrogen: estradiol cream 0.5-1 g daily for 2 weeks then twice weekly or estradiol tablet 10 mcg daily for 2 weeks then twice weekly. It can be helpful to advise patients that product names may not be affirming.
Screening	
Cardiovascular risk	Testosterone use does not appear to significantly increase cardiovascular risk. If using a risk calculator, use male scores if hormones were started early in life, female scores if hormones were started later (or both to estimate range)
Chest/Breast cancer	If the client has not had chest surgery, screen as per BC Cancer guidelines. The risk of cancer related to residual tissue after chest construction (double mastectomy) is unknown. If high risk or patient concern, consider physical exam and diagnostic ultrasound or other modality when appropriate.
Cervical cancer	Screen as per BC Cancer Cervical Screening guidelines On the requisition, use "T" for the gender marker, in the notes section indicate testosterone use, including dose and duration. See Appendix E - Sexual Health Screening
Sexual health	Some trans people may be at higher risk for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV and syphilis. Screen for STIs and consider HIV pre-exposure prohylaxis based on patient-specific risk factors. See Appendix E - Sexual Health Screening
Osteoporosis	Screen as per national guidelines (ages 65 and up) or earlier if higher risk (for example, long-term low levels of testosterone post-oophorectomy). Encourage vitamin D and calcium intake and weight bearing exercise. Maintain hormone therapy post-gonadectomy.
Colon cancer	Screen as per BC Cancer Colon Screening guidelines

Overview of estrogen-based hormone therapy

Estrogen in combination with a testosterone blocking medication is used to reduce testosterone-related features, induce estrogen-related features and relieve distress related to gender.

Medication (1 of 2)	Dose
Androgen Blockers	
Spironolactone First-line due to lower cost, effectiveness and tolerability May not significantly lower T levels alone	Starting dose: 50 mg po daily Usual maintenance dose: 200-300 mg daily Can be divided bid
Cyproterone Second-line, see Estrogen Consent form for Risks. Eligible for Special Authority if spironolactone is contraindicated, not tolerated or ineffective.	Starting dose: 12.5 mg po daily Usual maintenance dose: 12.5 –50 mg po daily (Use in lowest effective dose & try dose reductions where possible)
Finasteride An anti-androgen with primarily peripheral action Eligible for Special Authority if needed to augment effect of primary anti-androgen	2.5 mg po every other day
Alternative: not using a blocker A higher dose of estradiol may effectively suppress testosterone production	Maintain estrogen levels in sufficiently high range
Estrogen	
17-beta estradiol (Estrace®) 17-beta estradiol is used in gender-affirming care because it has the lowest risk profile of all oral estrogens.	Starting dose 1-2 mg po daily Usual maintenance dose 4-8 mg daily Can be divided bid
Estradiol patch (Estradot®/Estraderm®)	Starting dose 50 mcg patch twice per week. Usual maintenance dose: 100-400 mcg twice per week
Estradiol gel 0.06% (Estrogel®)*	Starting dose 2.5g daily (2 pumps, contains 150mcg estradiol) Usual maximum dose: 6.25g daily (5 pumps, contains 375mcg estradiol) May be limited by surface area required for gel application
Estradiol valerate** (injectable) Only available compounded	Starting dose at 2-3 mg IM/SC weekly Usual maintenance dose 4-8 mg IM/SC weekly Weekly dosing is preferred to minimize peak/trough variation Biweekly injection (of 2x the weekly dose) may be tolerated in some individuals

*As of March 1st, 2026, BC implemented national pharmacare funding of most generic forms of estrogen and progesterone hormone therapy. Compounded formulations such as estradiol valerate are not included.

**Doses have been updated to reflect expert opinion in the BC context.

Medication (2 of 2)	Dose
Progesterone	Not routinely recommended but may be included based on patient preference No clear evidence of benefit and possible increased risk Potential role in breast/nipple development (unproven)
Micronized progesterone (Prometrium®) First choice but more expensive	Starting dose 100 mg po daily Usual maintenance dose 100 – 400 mg daily
Medroxyprogesterone (Provera®)	Starting dose 5 mg po bid Usual maintenance dose 10-15 mg bid

It is important to review risks, benefits and potential side effects with patients prior to initiating treatment. Sample consent forms are included in this package- see Appendix C for Estrogen/Testosterone-blocker consent form and Appendix D for Progesterone consent form.

There is variation in practice among clinicians regarding dosing for hormone initiation, hormone maintenance and ordering labwork, and much of the decision-making depends on the clinical situation. Care providers may use eCase or call the RACE Line at 604-696-2131 or toll free at 1-877-696-2131 and request the "Transgender Health" option to consult an experienced clinician.

Risk considerations: Contraindications to estrogen therapy may include unstable cardiovascular disease, active hormone-sensitive cancer, end-stage liver disease and allergy. Many patients choose to begin or continue hormone therapy in spite of higher risks. In such cases, care providers should do a careful informed consent process that takes into consideration the capacity of the patient to make an informed decision and the significant harm that can come from withholding treatment. Care providers may use eCase or call the RACE Line at **604-696-2131** or toll free at **1-877-696-2131** and request the "Transgender Health" option to consult an experienced clinician.

Dose Titration: Titrate dose of estrogen and androgen-blocker q 4-6 weeks until maintenance dose is achieved (e.g. 2 mg estrace + 50 mg spiro x 4-6 weeks, then 3 mg estrace + 100 mg spironolactone x 4-6 weeks, then 4 mg estrace + 150 mg spironolactone x 4-6 weeks, etc.) A slower titration rate may be preferred by some patients or may be chosen based on clinical indication.

Injectable Route: Although the pharmacy team may state that vials of injectable hormones should be discarded within 28 days of initial use, this is not practical for a variety of reasons. Instead of disposing vials at 28 days, many providers advise:

- follow clean technique
- use strategies to minimize vial coring, including using the smallest appropriate gauge needles to draw up medication and
- monitor the vial for contamination or breakdown of the rubber stopper

If any signs of contamination are noted, it is recommended to discard the vial.

Goal of therapy: To maintain testosterone levels in the female range, estrogen levels in the 300-800 pmol/L range, minimize side effects and maintain expected rates of physical changes (degree of change influenced in part by patient preference).

Lab monitoring

Request the lab to report female reference ranges

Baseline and annually thereafter	• Total testosterone, CBC, ALT, fasting glucose, lipids, prolactin and if on spironolactone: CR and electrolytes
Following dose changes and 4-6 weeks after gonadectomy	• Total testosterone, estradiol, ALT, and if on spironolactone: CR and electrolytes

Areas for review in follow up visits

Subjective	Objective
■ Effects of hormones: physical, emotional ■ Current dose/desire for dose change ■ Side effects/concerns ■ Mental health: mood, body image, libido ■ Social: significant others, support, acceptance, safety, housing, finances ■ Lifestyle: exercise, nutrition, smoking, substance use	■ Blood pressure ■ Weight (baseline and q 6 months prn) ■ Mental status (brief assessment) ■ Cardiovascular and abdominal exam (baseline and yearly) ■ Labs ■ Other investigations as indicated

Managing side effects of estrogen, screening & health promotion

Managing side effects of Estrogen/Testosterone blockers and other common concerns	
Persistent dizziness/ postural hypotension	Caused by spironolactone, usually temporary and mild If severe or persistent switch to cyproterone. See Medication table for Special Authority eligibility
Low libido	Consider maintaining testosterone at higher level Trial of progesterone
Difficulty having/ maintaining physical arousal (erections)	Consider maintaining testosterone at a higher level Trials of phosphodiaesterace Type 5 inhibitor (Cialis®, Viagra®)
Elevated prolactin	Common and typically benign with estrogen therapy. Some guidelines recommend routine measurement of prolactin while others do not Consider pituitary imaging if level is >80 mcg/L or if symptomatic (headaches, visual changes, excessive galactorrhea)
Elevated transaminases	Usually transient unless another cause of hepatic dysfunction identified
Increase in and/or malodorous vaginal discharge post-vaginoplasty	The lining of the vagina is created from inverted penile/scrotal skin (squamous epithelium) and oral antibiotics are therefore usually ineffective at treating bacterial overgrowth. Use intravaginal metronidazole gel bid and plain water douching until symptoms resolve See Appendix E - Sexual health screening for direction on how to assess vaginal symptoms post vaginoplasty
Screening	
Cardiovascular risk	Estrogen may increase cardiovascular risk. If using a risk calculator, use female scores if hormones were started early in life, male scores if hormones were started later (or both to estimate range)
Breast cancer	Average risk, estrogen use >5 years & ages 50-74: as per BC Cancer Breast Screening guidelines Higher risk (e.g. positive family history, BMI > 35, progestin use) - consider early or more frequent screening, refer to BC Cancer Breast Screening guidelines for higher than average risk
Osteoporosis	Screen as per national guidelines (ages 65 and up) or earlier if higher risk. For example: • long-term low levels of estrogen post gonadectomy, or • long-term use of androgen blocker without estrogen Encourage vitamin D and calcium intake and exercise. Maintain hormone therapy post-gonadectomy.
Colon cancer	Screen as per BC Cancer Colon Screening guidelines
Prostate cancer	Long term androgen suppression likely lowers the risk of prostate cancer but as per BC Cancer, providers should discuss the benefits and limitations of the PSA test with patients between the ages of 50-70. PSA may be less reliable/falsely low in low androgen settings. The prostate is not removed during vaginoplasty/vulvoplasty - if indicated, assess the prostate with a digital vaginal exam via lower aspect of anterior vaginal wall.
Sexual health	Some trans people may be at higher risk for sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV and syphilis. Screen for STIs and consider HIV pre-exposure prohylaxis based on patient-specific risk factors. See Appendix E - Sexual health screening

Surgical care planing

Some Two-Spirit, trans and gender diverse people benefit from gender-affirming surgery. To access publicly funded surgery, one “surgical recommendation” is needed, in addition to the surgical referral. The recommendation confirms that WPATH criteria are met and the patient is ready from a psychosocial perspective, with adequate support and a plan to facilitate successful recovery from surgery.

Upper surgeries & gonadectomy: Surgical care planning care be provided in a primary care setting. See page 13 for necessary documentation. To learn about relevant resources & educational opportunities visit transcarebc.ca/education

Genital surgeries: **Due to the complexity of surgery and recovery, recommendations for these surgeries must be provided by Trans Care BC approved clinicians.** If you are not currently a Trans Care BC approved clinician but are interested in becoming one, or if you require assistance with the completion of a surgical recommendation for your patient, please contact Trans Care BC at 1-866-999-1514 or fill out the “Referral for surgical care planning” form at transcarebc.ca/health-professionals/med-forms

In private pay situations, surgeons set their own criteria regarding what is needed for care planning and referral.

Once the recommendation for surgery is complete, you can refer your patient for surgery. Please see the **surgery page at www.transcarebc.ca** for more details.

Criteria for surgery

Criteria
■ Gender incongruence is marked and sustained;
■ Meets diagnostic criteria for gender incongruence and other possible causes of apparent gender incongruence have been identified and excluded;
■ Demonstrates capacity to consent for the specific gender-affirming surgical intervention;
■ Understands the effect of gender-affirming surgical intervention on reproduction and reproductive options have been discussed;
■ Mental health and physical conditions that could negatively impact the outcome of gender-affirming surgical intervention have been assessed, risks and benefits have been discussed;
■ Stable on gender-affirming hormonal therapy (minimum 6 months for genital surgery & minimum 18 months for breast construction surgery, unless not desired or is medically contraindicated).*

*Note that these are only guidelines and clinicians should continue to apply clinical judgment. While these criteria are specific to adult care, surgery may sometimes be appropriate for older adolescents. Please see the section on working with trans youth for further discussion.

Overview of gender-affirming surgeries

Type of care	Description/purpose	Coverage	Surgical pathway & documentation
Breast construction	Implantation of prosthesis to enhance size and shape of breasts	Public but only under special circumstances[a]	Recommendation for Upper Surgery Referral to central waitlist
Chest construction or reduction	Removal of breast tissue and creation of a flatter and/or more sculpted chest	Public	Recommendation for Upper Surgery Referral to central waitlist
Hysterectomy +/- oopherectomy	Removal of uterus, ovaries, and fallopian tubes May eliminate the need for pap tests. Eliminates risk of ovarian, uterine, and cervical cancer. Prevents monthly bleeding	Public	Refer directly to gynecologist Some require recommendation for Gonadectomy
Orchiectomy	Removal of testes Eliminates need for testosterone blocker	Public	Refer directly to urologist Some require recommendation for Gonadectomy
Vaginoplasty	Creation of vagina and vulva (including mons, labia, clitoris, and urethral opening) and removal of penis, scrotum, and testes	Public	Recommendation for Genital Surgery For referral details, see transcarebc.ca/surgery
Vulvoplasty	Creation of vulva (including mons, labia, clitoris, and urethral opening) and removal of penis, scrotum, and testes	Public	Recommendation for Genital Surgery For referral details, see transcarebc.ca/surgery
Erectile tissue release	Creation of a penis by surgically releasing the erectile (clitoral) ligaments from the pubis	Public	Recommendation for Genital Surgery For referral details, see transcarebc.ca/surgery

[a] If little to no breast growth and/or significant asymmetric growth, as determined by plastic surgeon after at least 18 months of estrogen-based therapy (unless contraindicated)"

Type of care	Description/purpose	Coverage	Surgical pathway & documentation
Metoidioplasty	Creation of a penis using erectile release +/- the following: urethral lengthening, vaginectomy, scrotoplasty & testicular implants	Public	**Recommendation** for Genital Surgery For referral details, see **transcarebc.ca/surgery**
Phalloplasty	Creation of a penis +/- the following: urethral lengthening, vaginectomy, scrotoplasty & testicular and/or penile implants	Public	**Recommendation** for Genital Surgery For referral details, see **transcarebc.ca/surgery**
Facial surgery[b]	May include alterations to the facial bones, cheeks, forehead, nose, hairline and areas surrounding the eyes, ears, or lips	Private	Direct referral to plastic surgeon
Tracheal shave[b]	Reduction and reshaping of thyroid cartilage	Private	Direct referral to plastic surgeon
Voice surgery[b]	Alteration of vocal fold mass and/or tension to elevate pitch	Private	Direct referral to plastic surgeon
Liposuction or lipofilling[b]	Removal or transfer of body fat to achieve desired body contour	Private	Direct referral to plastic surgeon
Pectoral augmentation[b]	Implants placed beneath pectoral muscles to increase size and projection of muscles	Private	Direct referral to plastic surgeon

[b] If needed, contact Trans Care BC's Health Navigation team for providers experienced in gender-affirming procedures: **transcareteam@phsa.ca** or 1-866-999-1514.

Working with trans, Two-Spirit and gender diverse youth

Considerations when working with youth

Primary care providers have an important role to play in caring for trans, Two-Spirit and gender diverse youth (up to the age of 25). We can provide education and counselling to trans youth and families, link them with resources, and assist them to access gender-affirming medical and surgical treatments.

Receiving gender-affirming care can have significant health benefits for trans youth. The decisions to initiate medical treatment may be straightforward or more complex depending on age, level of independence, level of family support, and the presence of physical and/or mental health concerns. When possible, primary care providers should work collaboratively with more advanced practice clinicians such as pediatricians, pediatric endocrinologists and adolescent psychiatrists when caring for younger or otherwise more complex youth.

Family support is highly protective for trans youth. Care providers should therefore seek to nurture and sustain supportive relationships between trans youth and their families. Ideally, decisions regarding medical treatment are made collaboratively between the care provider, the youth and their family. However, there are times when parental involvement is not possible, despite the best efforts of clinicians to involve them. In these situations, the risks and benefits of providing treatment in the absence of parental support must be weighed against the risks and benefits of withholding treatment. When caring for youth, an important part of determining capacity is assessing the youth's developmental stage and their ability to understand the risks and benefits in the process of obtaining informed consent. Within the province of BC, the Infants Act allows clinicians to provide treatment to minors with capacity to consent, in the absence of parental support, when the treatment has been deemed in the best interest of the child.

A youth (under 19 years) can consent to health care services so long as the youth "understands the nature and consequences and the reasonably foreseeable benefits and risks of the health care": s. 17, Infants Act. The onus is on the health care provider to: 1) determine whether the youth is capable of consenting 2) explain the treatment options to the youth and be satisfied that the youth "understands the nature and consequences and the reasonably foreseeable benefits and risks of the procedure"; and 3) make reasonable efforts to determine whether, and conclude that, the health care is in the youth's best interests. If the youth is incapable of providing such consent, alternative consent is required.

Medical care for trans, Two-Spirit and gender diverse youth

Medical interventions differ depending on the age and stage of development when a youth presents for care. Youth in the early stages of puberty may benefit from a period of puberty suppression followed by initiation of hormone therapy at a later age, whereas those who present in the later stages of puberty may proceed directly to hormone therapy. Research has shown that trans youth who have access to puberty suppression, hormone therapy and gender-affirming surgery do as well, or better, in in terms of psychosocial functioning compared to non-trans peers.

Comprehensive care planning (readiness assessment) needs to be done prior to medical or surgical interventions. In addition to the elements described on page 5, care planning should also consider the age and developmental stage of the youth and their social situation. Care providers must be prepared to work with families, educators and others involved in the youth's life to ensure the youth has adequate social support. As with adults, care planning can be done by a range of professionals, including advanced practice NPs and GPs who have received training related to working with youth, including training in childhood and adolescent development and developmental psychopathology. Where possible, adolescent care planning is ideally provided by a multidisciplinary team. Some clinical situations may warrant involvement of a specialist, either for consultation or for ongoing care. Things to consider are age and capacity of the youth, level of family support, youth's willingness to include parents/guardians in treatment decisions, presence of unstable or complex physical or mental health conditions, availability of specialists, ability to pay for private specialist (e.g. psychologist) and the potential harms of delaying treatment. As always, specialist consultation should be obtained whenever a clinical situation feels beyond your training, experience, or comfort level at the present time.

If you would like information about care providers in your area who have experience working with trans youth or if you would like to receive further training in working with trans youth, please contact Trans Care BC at **1-866-999-1514**. See Appendix F for more information on the Trans Care BC's Health Navigation team and a referral form.

Puberty suppression

Youth in the early stages of puberty may benefit from a period of puberty suppression using leuprorelin (Lupron®) which is a GnRH analog. Leuprorelin safely blocks unwanted and distressing pubertal changes while allowing time for the youth to mature and for the youth and family to carefully consider decisions about further medical intervention.

Hormone therapy

Trans youth who are either past puberty or for whom puberty is well-advanced may benefit from hormone therapy. Initiation of hormone therapy can be considered for youth whether they have had a period of puberty suppression or not.

Surgery

Upper body surgeries may be appropriate for many youth under the age of the majority.

Gonadectomy and genital surgeries are usually only done for youth 18 and older, although there may be rare exceptions for those who began their transitions at a young age.

Additional resources & references

1. The Trans Care BC website (www.transcarebc.ca) provides a broad spectrum of information for health professionals, trans, Two-Spirit and gender diverse youth, adults and families. Some of the resources include:

Social	Understanding gender ID and name change Hair removal	Coming out Changing speech Binding, packing and tucking
Support	Support groups Information for immigrants and refugees	Information for children and families Health & wellbeing resources
Providers	Clinical guidelines & resources Practice support tools Consent forms Clinical Mentorship Call details	Patient handouts & resources Surgical referral info & resources Online training modules (foundational & advanced CME accredited)

2. BC Children's Hospital Transgender Care: www.bcchildrens.ca/our-services/clinics/gender
   Phone (secretary and nurses): **604-875-2117**, Toll free: **1-888-300-3088, x2117**
3. Trans Care BC's Health Navigation team: **1-866-999-1514** or transcareteam@phsa.ca
4. Trans Care BC online training modules and support tools: www.transcarebc.ca/education-centre
5. electronic Consultative Access to Specialist Expertise (eCase) and Rapid Access to Consultative Expertise (RACE) Line: **604-696-2131** or **1-877-696-2131** and select the "Transgender Health" option
6. BC Endocrine standards: www.transcarebc.ca/sites/default/files/2024-06/BC-Trans-Adult-Endocrine-Guidelines-2015.pdf
7. WPATH Standards version 8: www.wpath.org/publications/soc
8. Sherbourne Hormone Therapy Guidelines: https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/product/4thedition-sherbournes-guidelines-for-gender-affirming-primary-care-with-trans-and-non-binarypatients/
9. Rainbow Health Ontario: www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/TransHealthGuide/
10. Guidelines for the Primary and Gender-Affirming Care of Transgender and Gender Nonbinary People, UCSF: www.transhealth.ucsf.edu/guidelines
11. Canadian Professional Association for Transgender Health: www.cpath.ca
12. Feldman, J. & Deutsch, MB. Primary care of transgender individuals. In: UpToDate, Post TW (Ed), UpToDate, Waltham, MA. (Accessed on March 9, 2017.)
13. Devries et al., (2011) "Young Adult Psychological Outcome After Puberty Suppression and Gender Reassignment" PEDIATRICS Volume 134, Number 4, October 2014
14. Olsen, J., et al., "Management of the Transgender Adolescent" Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2011;165(2):171-176

Appendix A

Asking about gender identity and gender-affirming goals

Understanding the patient's experience of gender is what enables health care providers to confirm a diagnosis of gender incongruence or dysphoria and identify relevant treatment options. There are many ways to inquire about gender identity and expression and to discuss goals and expectations of treatment. It can be helpful to explain that these questions are intended to help you better understand their needs and goals, and ask permission to discuss them. Below are some sample questions that may help those who are new to this work. Please feel free to adapt them to your own style. It is important to remember that there is no universal experience of gender incongruence or dysphoria. For example, an individual may feel dysphoric about certain aspects of their body and/or discomfort with societal expectations associated with their assigned sex, or may desire a particular intervention to enhance gender pleasure or gender joy. Incongruence and a desire for gender-affirming medical or surgical care can emerge at any age. Staying open to your patient's unique experience and goals is the best way to provide gender-affirming care.

Sample questions:

1. How would you describe your gender? If prompting is needed: For example, some people identify as a man, a trans man, genderqueer, etc.
2. Do you remember the time when you realized that your gender was different from what others had assumed? Or: Do you remember when you first started to see your gender as _____?
3. Can you tell me a bit about what's happened since realizing this? If prompting is needed: Some people find this to be a difficult realization and may not feel safe to discuss it, other people are fortunate to have people in their life they feel safe talking with – what was it like for you?
4. Have you taken any steps to express your gender differently/to feel more comfortable in your gender? If prompting is needed: Some people ask others to use a different name and pronoun, or make changes to their hair or clothing styles.
5. If they have taken steps to express their gender differently: What was that like for you? How did that feel?
6. Are you hoping to take any other steps in the future?
7. Have you thought about how you will manage changes in your appearance and gender expression at work or school?
8. Who has supported you along the way? If they have not spoken with anyone else yet: Who do you think might be supportive if you bring this up with them?
9. When did you start thinking about taking hormone therapy (or having surgery) ?
10. What do you anticipate to be the main benefits of hormone therapy (or surgery) for you?
11. What changes from hormones are you most looking forward to?
12. Are there any potential changes that you are not sure of?
13. Have you done anything to prepare yourself for this step? If prompting is needed: Have you talked with any peers, or asked friends or family for support? Done any reading or research?
14. Do you anticipate any challenges?
15. Who is there to support you with any challenges that do occur?
16. Are you aware of some of the risks of hormone therapy (or surgery)?
17. Do you know about any potential impacts of this intervention on your fertility? Would you like me to refer you to a fertility clinic to learn more about fertility preservation options?
18. Some people find it helpful to have the support of a counsellor for either decision making or ongoing support after beginning hormone therapy – would you like a referral to a trans competent counsellor?
19. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix B

Testosterone consent

Testosterone consent

Testosterone is used to reduce estrogen-related features and induce testosterone-related features in order to make you feel more at ease in your body.

Informed consent is used to make sure you know what to expect from hormone therapy including physical and emotional changes, side effects and potential risks. The full medical effects and safety are not fully known and some potential risks are serious and possibly fatal. These risks must be weighed against the benefits that hormone therapy can have on your health and quality of life. Benefits may include increased comfort in your body, decreased discomfort related to gender, improved mental health and increased success in work, school and relationships. Each person responds differently to hormone therapy and the amount of change varies from person to person. Testosterone is available in several forms but most people use injectable testosterone due to lower cost.

Testosterone-related effects

Testosterone-related changes may include:	Expected onset	Expected maximum effect
*Deeper voice	3-12 months	Years
*Growth of body and facial hair	3-6 months	3-5 years
*Growth of the external genitals (clitoris)	3-6 months	1-2 years
*Scalp hair loss	>12 months	Variable
Decreased fertility	Variable	Variable
Fat redistribution and possible weight gain or loss	3-6 months	2-5 years
Increased muscle	6-12 months	2-5 years
Mood changes	Variable	Variable
Changes to sex drive, sexual interests or sexual function	Variable	Variable
Skin changes including increased oil and acne	1-6 months	1-2 years
Dryness of internal genitals (vagina)	3-6 months	1-2 years
Stopping of monthly bleeding (period)	2-6 months	n/a

From the World Professional Association of Transgender Health's Standards of Care, Version 7

*Change is permanent and will remain even if hormone therapy is stopped

Potential Risks	
Increased red blood cells (polycythemia) **Sleep apnea** **Scalp hair loss (balding)**	Likely increased risk
Changes to cholesterol which may increase risk for heart attack or stroke **Liver inflammation**	Possible increased risk
Diabetes **Heart and circulation problems (cardiovascular disease)** **Increased blood pressure**	Possible increased risk if you have additional risk factors

Risks for some of these conditions may be affected by:

- Pre-existing physical or mental health conditions
- Family history of physical or mental health conditions
- Cigarette smoking or other substance use
- Nutrition, exercise, stress

_____ (name of care provider) has discussed with me the nature and purpose of hormone therapy; the benefits and risks, including the possibility that hormone therapy may not accomplish the changes I want; the possible or likely consequences of hormone therapy; and other alternative diagnostic or treatment options

1. I have read and understand the above information regarding hormone therapy, and accept the risks involved
2. I have had enough opportunity to discuss my health, goals and treatment options with my care provider, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction
3. I believe I have adequate knowledge on which to base informed consent to receive hormone therapy
4. I authorize and give my informed consent to receive hormone therapy

Patient signature _____ Provider signature _____

Date _____

Appendix C

Estrogen/Testosterone-blocker consent

Estrogen/Testosterone-blocker consent

Estrogen and testosterone-blockers are used to reduce testosterone-related features and induce estrogen-related features in order to help you to feel more at ease in your body.

Informed consent is used to make sure you know what to expect from hormone therapy including physical and emotional changes, side effects and potential risks. The full medical effects and safety are not fully known and some potential risks are serious and possibly fatal. These risks must be weighed against the benefits that hormone therapy can have on your health and quality of life. Benefits may include increased comfort in your body, decreased discomfort related to gender, improved mental health and increased success in work, school and relationships. Each person responds differently to hormone therapy and the amount of change varies from person to person.

Estrogen is available in several forms. Most people use pills due to lower cost but transdermal forms may lower the cardiovascular risks associated with estrogen.

Estrogen/testosterone-blockers related changes may include:	Expected onset	Expected maximum effect
* Breast growth	3-6 months	2-3 years
* Smaller genitals (testes)	3-6 months	2-3 years
Decreased fertility	Variable	Variable
Fat redistribution and potentially weight gain or loss	3-6 months	2-5 years
Decreased muscle mass	3-6 months	1-2 years
Mood changes	Variable	Variable
Decreased spontaneous genital arousal (erections)	1-3 months	3-6 months
Changes to sex drive, sexual interests or sexual function	Variable	Variable
Skin changes including softening & decreased oiliness	1-6 months	Unknown
Decreased growth of body & facial hair	6-12 months	3 years
Decreased scalp hair loss (balding)	No regrowth, loss stops 1-3 months	1-2 years

From the World Professional Assocation of Transgender Health's Standards of Care, Version 7

*Change is permanent and will remain even if hormone therapy is stopped

Potential Risks	
Increased risk of blood clots, pulmonary embolism (blood clot in the lung), stroke or heart attack **Gall stones**	Likely increased risk
Changes to cholesterol which may increase risk for pancreatitis, heart attack or stroke **Liver inflammation** **Nausea** **Headaches** **Increased incidence of meningiomas (if using cyproterone)**	Possible increased risk
Diabetes **Heart and circulation problems (cardiovascular disease)** **Changes to kidney function (if using spironolactone)** **Increased potassium which can lead to heart arrhythmias (irregular heart beat) if using spironolactone** **Increased blood pressure** **Breast cancer** **Increased prolactin and possibility of benign pituitary tumours**	Possible increased risk if you have additional risk factors

Risks for some of these conditions may be affected by:

- Pre-existing physical or mental health conditions
- Family history of physical or mental health conditions
- Cigarette smoking or other substance use
- Nutrition, exercise, stress

_____ (name of care provider) has discussed with me the nature and purpose of hormone therapy; the benefits and risks, including the possibilty that hormone therapy may not accomplish the changes I want; the possible or likely consequences of hormone therapy; and other alternative diagnostic or treatment options

1. I have read and understand the above information regarding hormone therapy, and accept the risks involved
2. I have had enough opportunity to discuss my health, goals and treatment options with my care provider, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction
3. I believe I have adequate knowledge on which to base informed consent to receive hormone therapy
4. I authorize and give my informed consent to receive hormone therapy

Patient signature _____ Provider signature _____

Date _____

Appendix D

Progesterone consent

Progesterone consent

Progesterone is not included in standard hormone regimens but may be desired by some trans people. Requests for progesterone are usually related to a desire to enhance breast development. While there is no clear evidence of benefit from progesterone, some trans people and clinicians believe that it may have a role in breast and areola/nipple development and/or may be beneficial for enhancing sex drive, sleep and mood.

Research suggests that taking a combination of both estrogen and progesterone carries higher risk for cardiovascular disease and breast cancer compared to taking estrogen on its own. This research came from a study of older cisgender (non-trans) women going through menopause who were using a type of estrogen that is no longer recommended. Because there is evidence showing increased risk associated with progesterone use and a lack of clear evidence showing benefits, progesterone is not generally recommended in published gender-affirming care guidelines. However, some experts believe that this evidence does not apply to trans people taking hormone therapy.

This means that some care providers may decide to include progesterone, at least for a trial period, after a careful discussion of risks and benefits. They may request that patients sign an additional consent form if progesterone is prescribed.

Additional risks from progesterone may include:	
Heart and circulation problems (cardiovascular disease)	Diabetes
Breast cancer	Testosterone-like effects such as increased body hair, acne
Mood changes including depression	Weight gain
Increased blood pressure and cholesterol	

Risks for some of these conditions may be affected by:

- Pre-existing physical or mental health conditions
- Family history of physical or mental health conditions
- Cigarette smoking or other substance use
- Nutrition, exercise, stress

_____ (name of care provider) has discussed with me the nature and purpose of hormone therapy; the benefits and risks, including the possibility that hormone therapy may not accomplish the changes I want; the possible or likely consequences of hormone therapy; and other alternative diagnostic or treatment options

1. I have read and understand the above information regarding hormone therapy, and accept the risks involved
2. I have had enough opportunity to discuss my health, goals and treatment options with my care provider, and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction
3. I believe I have adequate knowledge on which to base informed consent to receive hormone therapy
4. I authorize and give my informed consent to receive hormone therapy

Patient signature _____ Provider signature _____

Date _____

Appendix E

Sexual health screening

Sexual health screening

This guideline provides screening recommendations that are based on anatomy and is inclusive of gender-affirming surgeries and hormone therapy.

All patients should be screened according to the types of sexual activities they participate in. This may include screening throats, rectums, genitals and genital lesions as indicated. Serology should be included during routine STI screening for all patients, including TP EIA, HIV, and Hepatitis A, B & C as indicated. Assess need for immunizations (HPV, HAV, HBV) and HIV PrEP on an individual basis. Self-swabbing, blind swabs and urine CT/GC NATs are appropriate for symptomatic patients who do not desire a physical exam.

Note: Symptomatic patients should have microbiological analysis (which includes yeast and BV prn) in addition to STI screening.

BCCDC's **GetCheckedOnline.com** is an excellent screening option for asymptomatic clients as well (use code 'TransCare' to make an account).

Site	Asymptomatic	Symptomatic	Notes
Penile urethra (with or without phalloplasty or metoidioplasty with urethral lengthening) *If urethral symptoms occur after gender-affirming surgery, consult with an experienced clinician, as swabs may be contraindicated: RACE line: 604-696-2131 or toll free at 1-877-696-2131 and request the "Transgender Health" option Trans Care BC: 1-866-999-1514 transcareteam@phsa.ca	• CT/GC NAT urine	**STI Screen:** • CT/GC NAT (urine) • Trich NAT	All swabs may be self or practitioner collected Requisition tips: • Specify site as "Urethra" prn • If 'female' or 'X' gender marker, indicate "Trans patient" to reduce likelihood of sample rejection
		Microbiological analysis: • GC culture • Yeast • C&S superficial wound • Urine dipstick and/or urinalysis prn	Use liquid Amies culture red-top swab

Site	Asymptomatic	Symptomatic	Notes
Vagina after vaginoplasty If pain, discharge or bleeding occur in the early post-operative period, consult with an experienced clinician: RACE line: 604-696-2131 or toll free at 1-877-696-2131 and request the "Transgender Health" option Trans Care BC: 1-866-999-1514 transcareteam@phsa.ca	• CT/GC NAT urine Some patients may find pelvic exams affirming. If patient preference is for pelvic exam: CT/GC NAT vaginal (clinician-collected) Note: This test has not been validated for use in vaginoplasty • There is no evidence to support the need for Pap tests of vaginal vault	**STI Screen:** • CT/GC NAT (urine or vaginal) • Trich NAT **Microbiological analysis:** • GC culture • Yeast • C&S superficial wound • Urine dipstick and/or urinalysis prn **Prostate exam prn** Note: the prostate is not removed during vaginoplasty	All swabs may be self or practitioner collected Requisition tips: • Specify site as "Vaginoplasty" prn • If 'male' or 'X' gender marker, indicate "Trans patient" to reduce likelihood of sample rejection Use liquid Amies culture red-top swab Assessment can be done by digital exam via lower aspect of anterior vaginal wall

Site	Asymptomatic	Symptomatic	Notes
Vagina after total hysterectomy See BCCDC's Pelvic Exam Decision Support Tool (March 2017)	• CT/GC NAT urine (preferred) or vaginal	**STI Screen:** • CT/GC NAT (urine or vaginal) • Trich NAT	All swabs may be self or practitioner collected Requisition tips: • If 'male' or 'X' gender marker, indicate "Trans patient" to reduce likelihood of sample rejection
	• See "BCCA Screening for Cancer of the Cervix" to determine screening recommendations for patients with removal of cervix	**Microbiological analysis:** • Urine dipstick and/or urinalysis prn • GC culture • Yeast <u>If on testosterone*:</u> • C&S superficial wound <u>If not on testosterone:</u> • Vaginitis Chronic	Use liquid Amies culture red-top swab

*Testosterone can induce a hypoestrogenic state in the internal genitals. This decreases epithelial cells, tissue resilience, skin barrier function and lactobacilli, and leads to increased susceptibility to traumatic irritation (during ADLs, sexual activity, etc), increased genital pH and susceptibility to BV symptoms. LifeLabs has advised that the low (or non-existent) levels of lactobacilli make screening for BV inapplicable, since this would yield results (BV intermediate or BV positive) that may not accurately reflect the underlying cause of symptoms.

The "C&S superficial wound" panel will provide more information about the types of organisms present and would better assist in clinical decision-making.

For information on treating internal genital dryness (atrophy), see "Managing side effects of testosterone & other common concerns".

Site	Asymptomatic	Symptomatic	Notes
Vagina with cervix See BCCDC's Pelvic Exam Decision Support Tool (March 2017)	• CT/GC NAT (urine or vaginal)	**STI Screen:** • CT/GC NAT (urine or vaginal) • Trich NAT	All swabs may be self or practitioner collected Requisition tips: • If 'male' or 'X' gender marker, indicate "Trans patient" to reduce likelihood of sample rejection
		Microbiological analysis: • Urine dipstick and/or urinalysis prn • GC culture • Yeast If on testosterone*: • C&S superficial wound If not on testosterone: • Vaginitis Chronic	Use liquid Amies culture red-top swab
		• Bi-manual exam. If patient declines or is not able to tolerate bi-manual, assess for fundal tenderness only	Note: patients on testosterone may have cervical motion tenderness (CMT) due to genital tissue atrophy (presence of CMT not necessarily indicative of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease)
	• Cervical screening prn	• If due for cervical screening, advise patient that inflammatory exudate may obscure endo-cervical cells, and recommend booking a separate appointment for cervical screening	

*Testosterone can induce a hypoestrogenic state in the internal genitals. This decreases epithelial cells, tissue resilience, skin barrier function and lactobacilli, and leads to increased susceptibility to traumatic irritation (during ADLs, sexual activity, etc), increased genital pH and susceptibility to BV symptoms. LifeLabs has advised that the low (or non-existent) levels of lactobacilli make screening for BV inapplicable, since this would yield results (BV intermediate or BV positive) that may not accurately reflect the underlying cause of symptoms.

The "C&S superficial wound" panel will provide more information about the types of organisms present and would better assist in clinical decision-making.

For information on treating internal genital dryness (atrophy), see "Managing side effects of testosterone & other common concerns".

Site	Asymptomatic	Symptomatic	Notes
Throat	• CT/GC NAT	• GC C&S • CT/GC NAT	Listed in order of collection All swabs may be self or practitioner collected
Rectum	• CT/GC NAT	• GC C&S • CT/GC NAT • HSV PCR	Listed in order of collection All swabs may be self or practitioner collected
Lesions (genital and oral) *For lesions suspected of LGV or Syphilis, consult with an experienced clinician : <u>RACE line:</u> 604-696-2131 or toll free at 1-877-696-2131 and request the "Sexually Transmitted Infection Service"		• HSV PCR	
		• LGV* Use CT/GC NAT swab	Sample must be sent to BCCDC PHL Use 'Bacteriology' requisition and write "If positive for CT, send to NML for testing"
		• Syphillis* <u>Syphillis PCR buffer</u>: Submit swab in Syphilis PCR buffer <u>No Syphillis PCR buffer available:</u> Use CT/GC NAT swab (orange Gen-Probe Aptima)	<u>Syphilis PCR buffer:</u> Sample must be sent to BCCDC PHL. Use 'Bacteriology' requisition and write "For *T.pallidum PCR*" <u>No Syphilis PCR buffer available:</u> Sample must be sent to BCCDC PHL. Use 'Bacteriology' requisition and write "Attn Dr Morshed, for *T.pallidum PCR*"

Appendix F

Description of Trans Care BC's Health Navigation team

TRANS CARE BC
Provincial Health Services Authority

TRANS CARE BC
Our Services

We're a small team of health navigators, nurses, peers and support staff—with access to a doctor as needed.

We provide consultation, health navigation and care coordination services for gender-affirming health care across BC.

WE CAN HELP YOU:

- Find health & wellness resources
- Navigate the health care system
- Access health coordination for pre- & post-surgical care for surgeries taking place outside of BC.

WE SUPPORT:

- Youth, adults, children & families
- Caregivers, partners, teachers, friends
- Health care providers, social workers, counsellors & other service providers

WE WORK WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS TO:

- Promote best practices in gender-affirming client-centred care
- Provide clinical consultation & support
- Offer education opportunities to enhance trans health services across BC

CONTACT US

Call us toll-free at
1-866-999-1514
Monday – Friday

Email us at
transcareteam@phsa.ca

www.phsa.ca/transcare

WE BELIEVE IN:

- Gender-affirming care, inclusive of non-binary identities
- Being accountable & transparent in our work
- Taking an anti-oppressive & trauma informed approach
- Being person-centered
- Being equitable & accessible
- Being collaborative

VISION

A British Columbia where people of all genders are able to access gender-affirming health care, and live, work and thrive in their communities.


www.transcarebc.ca