OVERVIEW
The policy documents the coverage and guidelines for Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS) applicable to BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial products.

Note: Due to recent changes in the member's benefit, please contact Customer Service at the number on the back of the member's ID card to validate benefits. The correct benefit may not be reflected in the member's Benefit Booklet, Evidence of Coverage, or Subscriber Agreement.

MEDICAL CRITERIA
None

PRIOR AUTHORIZATION
Prior authorization is required for BlueCHiP for Medicare and recommended for Commercial groups.

POLICY STATEMENT
BlueCHiP for Medicare and Commercial Products
Preauthorization is required in BlueCHiP for Medicare and recommended for Commercial products to determine if the member is eligible for coverage and to assist in maximizing the benefit.

When a benefit for gender reassignment surgery exists, it is considered medically necessary when the documentation submitted confirms that all of the following criteria are met:

- The individual has been diagnosed with the gender identity disorder (GID) or gender dysphoria of transsexualism
- The individual has successfully lived and worked within the desired gender role full-time for at least 12 months (real-life experience) without returning to the original gender

Surgical Treatment for Gender Reassignment
When a covered benefit for gender reassignment surgery exists and all of the above eligibility criteria are met, the following surgeries are medically necessary for transwomen (male to female):

- Orchietomy (54520, 54690)
- Penectomy (54125)
- Vaginoplasty (57335)
- Colovaginoplasty (57291-57292)
- Clitoroplasty (56805)
- Labiaplasty (58999)
- Breast Augmentation (19324-19325) Note: augmentation mammoplasty (including breast prosthesis if necessary) if the physician prescribing hormones and the surgeon have documented that breast enlargement after undergoing hormone treatment for 12 months is not sufficient for comfort in the social role
- Trachea shave/reduction thyroid chondroplasty: reduction of the thyroid cartilage (31899)
When a covered benefit for gender reassignment surgery exists and all of the above eligibility criteria are met, the following surgeries are medically necessary for transmen (female to male):

- Breast reconstruction (e.g., mastectomy (19303-19304), reduction mammoplasty (19318))
- Hysterectomy (58150, 58262, 58291, 58552, 58554, 58571, 58573)
- Salpingo-oophorectomy (58661)
- Colpectomy/Vaginectomy (57110)
- Metoidioplasty (55899)
- Phalloplasty (55899)
- Urethroplasty (53430)
- Scrotoplasty (55175, 55180)

Other services (e.g., laboratory, pharmacy, radiology, or behavioral health services) are covered according to the plan design.

**Commercial Products**

The following procedures are considered cosmetic services and are non-covered:

- Abdominoplasty
- Brow ptosis surgery
- Cervicoplasty
- Chemical exfoliations, peels, abrasions (or dermabrasions or planing for acne, scarring, wrinkling, sun damage or other benign conditions)
- Correction of variations in normal anatomy including augmentation mammoplasty, mastopexy, and correction of congenital breast asymmetry
- Dermabrasion
- Ear piercing or repair of a torn earlobe
- Excision of excess skin or subcutaneous tissue (except panniculectomy as listed above)
- Genioplasty
- Gynecomastia surgery, including but not limited to mastectomy and reduction mammoplasty
- Hair transplants
- Hair removal (including electrolysis epilation)
- Inverted nipple surgery
- Laser treatment for acne and acne scars
- Osteoplasty - facial bone reduction
- Otoplasty
- Procedures to correct visual acuity including, but not limited to, cornea surgery or lens implants
- Removal of asymptomatic benign skin lesions
- Repeated cautercizations or electrofulguration methods used to remove growths on the skin
- Rhinoplasty
- Rhytidectomy
- Scar revision, regardless of symptoms
- Sclerotherapy for spider veins
- Subcutaneous injection of filling material
- Suction assisted lipectomy
- Tattooing or tattoo removal (except tattooing of the nipple/areola related to a mastectomy)
- Testicular prosthesis surgery
- Treatment of vitiligo
- Voice modification surgery
- Reversal of genital surgery or reversal of surgery to revise secondary sex characteristics
BlueCHiP for Medicare

Cosmetic surgery or expenses incurred in connection with such surgery is not covered. Cosmetic surgery includes any surgical procedure directed at improving appearance, except when required for the prompt (i.e., as soon as medically feasible) repair of accidental injury or for the improvement of the functioning of a malformed body member.

COVERAGE

Due to recent changes in coverage of this benefit, please contact Customer Service at the number on the back of the member’s ID card to validate benefits. The correct benefit may not be reflected the member’s Benefit Booklet, Evidence of Coverage, or Subscriber Agreement.

BACKGROUND

Gender identity disorder is the formal diagnosis used by professionals to describe persons who experience significant gender dysphoria (discontent with their biological sex and/or birth gender).

DSM V uses the term “gender dysphoria” instead of GID because of stigmatization associated with the term gender identity disorder. Additionally, the diagnosis grouping has been moved out of the sexual disorder category and moved into its own.

DSM V criteria:

1. Discomfort with one’s assigned sex or gender role for period of at least six months, as manifested by at least two of the following indicators:
   a. Feeling of incongruence between one’s felt gender identity and one’s primary and secondary sex characteristics;
   b. Desire to be rid of one primary and secondary sex characteristics;
   c. Desire for the sex characteristics of the other sex;
   d. Desire to be the other sex;
   e. Desire to be treated as the other sex;
   f. Belief that one has the feelings and reactions typical of the other sex.
2. The individual does not have an intersex or developmental condition;
3. The condition causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other areas of functioning;
4. “Gender identity disorder not otherwise specified” is proposed to include individuals who cannot be diagnosed as having a specific gender identity disorder but experience distress and impairment as a result of their gender identity.

In 2010, the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) released a statement noting that “the expression of gender characteristics, including identities that are not stereotypically associated with one’s assigned sex at birth is a common and culturally diverse human phenomenon [that] should not be judged as inherently pathological or negative.” Accordingly, transsexual, transgender, and gender nonconforming persons are not intrinsically disordered. Rather, the distress of gender dysphoria, when present, is the matter that may be diagnosable and for which several therapeutic options are available.

Gender reassignment surgery is one treatment option. GRS is not a single procedure, but part of a complex process involving multiple medical, psychiatric, and surgical modalities performed in conjunction with each other to help the candidate for gender reassignment achieve successful behavioral and medical outcomes. Before undertaking GRS, candidates need to undergo important medical and psychological evaluations, and begin medical therapies and behavioral trials to confirm that surgery is the most appropriate treatment choice.

Therapeutic approaches include psychological interventions and gender reassignment therapy, including hormonal interventions that masculinize or feminize the body, and surgical interventions that change the genitalia and other sex characteristics. Gender identity disorders may manifest at childhood, adolescence, or adulthood.
The surgical procedures for male-to-female individuals, also known as “transwomen” may include:
orchiectomy, penectomy, vaginoplasty, clitoroplasty, labioplasty breast augmentation, trachea
shave/reduction thyroid chondroplasty, and techniques include penile skin inversion, pedicled colosigmoid
transplant, and free skin grafts to line the neovagina. For female-to male persons, also known as “transmen”
surgery may include hysterectomy, ovariectomy, vaginectomy, salpingooophorectomy, metoidioplasty,
scrotoplasty, urethroplasty, placement of testicular prostheses, and phalloplasty.

Prior to surgery, patients typically undergo hormone replacement therapy for a period of 12 continuous
months. Transmen are treated with testosterone to increase muscle and bone mass, decrease breast size,
increase clitoris size, increase facial and body hair, arrest menses, and deepen the voice. Transwomen are
 treated with anti-androgens and estrogens to increase percentage of body fat compared to muscle mass,
decrease body hair, decrease testicular size, decrease erectile function, and increase breast size.

Individuals diagnosed with GID also must undertake real-life experience living in the identity-congruent
gender role. This provides sufficient opportunity for patients to experience and socially adjust in their desired
role before undergoing irreversible surgery. During this experience, patients should present themselves
consistently, on a day-to-day basis and across all life settings, in their desired gender role. Changing gender
role can have profound personal and social consequences, and individuals must demonstrate an awareness of
the challenges and the ability to function successfully in their gender role.

In 2009 the Endocrine Society published a clinical practice guideline for endocrine treatment of transsexual
persons (Hembree, et al., 2009). As part of this guideline, the endocrine society recommends that transsexual
persons consider genital sex reassignment surgery only after both the physician responsible for endocrine
transition therapy and the mental health professional find surgery advisable; that surgery be recommended
only after completion of at least one year of consistent and compliant hormone treatment; and that the
physician responsible for endocrine treatment advise the individual for sex reassignment surgery and
collaborate with the surgeon regarding hormone use during and after surgery.

Sex reassignment surgical procedures for diagnosed cases of GID should be recommended only after a
comprehensive evaluation by a qualified mental health professional. The surgeon should have a demonstrated
competency and extensive training in sexual reconstructive surgery. Long-term follow-up is highly
recommended.

Comprehensive evaluation is generally supported by the following documentation:

1. Letters that attests to the psychological aspects of the candidate’s GID.
   a. One of the letters must be from a behavioral health professional with a doctoral degree
      (who is capable of adequately evaluating if the candidate has any co-morbid psychiatric
      conditions);
   b. One of the letters must be from the candidate’s physician or behavioral health provider,
      who has treated the candidate for a minimum of 12 months (Note: if the candidate has
      not been treated continuously by one clinician for 12 months but has transferred care
      from one clinician to a second clinician, then both clinicians must submit
documentation and their combined treatment must have been for 12 months). The letter
or letters must document the following:
      i. Whether the author of the letter is part of a gender identity disorder treatment
         team; and
      ii. The candidate’s general identifying characteristics; and
      iii. The initial and evolving gender, sexual, and other psychiatric diagnoses; and
      iv. The duration of their professional relationship including the type of
         psychotherapy or evaluation that the candidate underwent; and
      v. The eligibility criteria that have been met by the candidate; and
      vi. The physician or mental health professionals rationale for surgery; and
vii. The degree to which the candidate has followed the treatment and experiential requirements to date and the likelihood of future compliance; and

viii. The extent of participation in psychotherapy throughout the 12 month real-life trial (if such therapy is recommended by a treating medical or behavioral health practitioner); and

ix. That during the 12-month, real-life experience, persons other than the treating therapist were aware of the candidate’s experience in the desired gender role and could attest to the candidate’s ability to function in the new role. For candidates not meeting the 12-month eligibility criteria, the letter should still comment on the candidate’s ability to function and experience in the desired gender role.

x. That the candidate has, intends to, or is in the process of acquiring a legal gender identity-appropriate name change; and

xi. Demonstrable progress on the part of the candidate in consolidating the new gender identity, including improvements in the ability to handle:
   1. Work, family, and interpersonal issues;
   2. Behavioral health issues, should they exist. This implies satisfactory control of issues such as:
      a. Sociopathy
      b. Substance abuse
      c. Psychosis
      d. Suicidality

c. If the letters specified in 1a and 1b above come from the same clinician, then a letter from a second physician or behavioral health provider familiar with the candidate corroborating the information provided by the first clinician is required;

d. A letter of documentation must be received from the treating surgeon. If one of the previously described letters is from the treating surgeon then it must contain the documentation noted in the section below. All letters from a treating surgeon must confirm that:
   i. The candidate meets the eligibility criteria listed in this policy; and
   ii. The treating surgeon feels that the candidate is likely to benefit from surgery; and
   iii. The surgeon has personally communicated with the treating mental health provider or physician treating the candidate; and
   iv. The surgeon has personally communicated with the candidate and that the candidate understands the ramifications or surgery.

CODING
The following codes, when done for the purpose of gender reassignment for those limited groups are covered when the criteria are met:

19301 Mastectomy, partial (e.g., lumpectomy, tylectomy, quadrantectomy, segmentectomy)
19303 Mastectomy, simple, complete
19304 Mastectomy, subcutaneous
19316 Mastopexy
19324 Mammaplasty, augmentation; without prosthetic implant
19325 Mammaplasty, augmentation; with prosthetic implant
19350 Nipple/areola reconstruction
31899 Unlisted procedure, trachea, bronchi
53430 Urethroplasty, reconstruction of female urethra
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPT Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>54125</td>
<td>Amputation of penis; complete</td>
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<tr>
<td>54520</td>
<td>Orchietomy, simple (including subcapsular), with or without testicular prosthesis, scrotal or inguinal approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54690</td>
<td>Laparoscopy, surgical; orchietomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>55175</td>
<td>Scrotoplasty; simple</td>
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<tr>
<td>55180</td>
<td>Scrotoplasty; complicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56625</td>
<td>Vulvectomy simple; complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56800</td>
<td>Plastic repair of introitus</td>
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<tr>
<td>56805</td>
<td>Clitoroplasty for intersex state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56810</td>
<td>Perineoplasty, repair of perineum, nonobstetrical (separate procedure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57106</td>
<td>Vaginectomy, partial removal of vaginal wall</td>
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<tr>
<td>57107</td>
<td>Vaginectomy, partial removal of vaginal wall; with removal of paravaginal tissue (radical vaginectomy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>57110</td>
<td>Vaginectomy, complete removal of vaginal wall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57111</td>
<td>Vaginectomy, complete removal of vaginal wall; with removal of paravaginal tissue (radical vaginectomy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57291</td>
<td>Construction of artificial vagina; without graft</td>
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<tr>
<td>57292</td>
<td>Construction of artificial vagina; with graft</td>
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<tr>
<td>57335</td>
<td>Vaginoplasty for intersex state</td>
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<tr>
<td>58150</td>
<td>Total abdominal hysterectomy (corpus and cervix), with or without removal of tube(s), with or without removal of ovary(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58180</td>
<td>Supracervical abdominal hysterectomy (subtotal hysterectomy), with or without removal of tube(s), with or without removal of ovary(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>58260</td>
<td>Vaginal hysterectomy, for uterus 250 g or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>58262</td>
<td>Vaginal hysterectomy, for uterus 250 g or less; with removal of tube(s), and/or ovary(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>58275</td>
<td>Vaginal hysterectomy, with total or partial vaginectomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>58280</td>
<td>Vaginal hysterectomy, with total or partial vaginectomy; with repair of enterocele</td>
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<tr>
<td>58285</td>
<td>Vaginal hysterectomy, radical (Schauta type operation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58290</td>
<td>Vaginal hysterectomy, for uterus greater than 250 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58291</td>
<td>Vaginal hysterectomy, for uterus greater than 250 g; with removal of tube(s) and/or ovary(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58541</td>
<td>Laparoscopy, surgical, supracervical hysterectomy, for uterus 250 g or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>58542</td>
<td>Laparoscopy, surgical, supracervical hysterectomy, for uterus 250 g or less; with removal of tube(s) and/or ovary(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>58543</td>
<td>Laparoscopy, surgical, supracervical hysterectomy, for uterus greater than 250 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>58544</td>
<td>Laparoscopy, surgical, supracervical hysterectomy, for uterus greater than 250 g; with removal of tube(s) and/or ovary(s)</td>
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<td>58550</td>
<td>Laparoscopy, surgical, with vaginal hysterectomy, for uterus 250 g or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>58552</td>
<td>Laparoscopy, surgical, with vaginal hysterectomy, for uterus 250 g or less; with removal of tube(s) and/or ovary(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td>58553</td>
<td>Laparoscopy, surgical, with vaginal hysterectomy, for uterus greater than 250 g</td>
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<tr>
<td>58554</td>
<td>Laparoscopy, surgical, with vaginal hysterectomy, for uterus greater than 250 g; with removal of tube(s) and/or ovary(s)</td>
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The following CPT codes are not to be used for pricing or claims processing. Claims should be filed with the specific procedures:

- 55970 Intersex surgery; male to female
- 55980 Intersex surgery; female to male

**RELATED POLICIES**
None

**PUBLISHED**
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