

# **TRANSGENDER SURGICAL PROGRAM**

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## **AT MGH**

***WELCOME***

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## WELCOME

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At the Massachusetts General Hospital, the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery works with the Transgender Health Program to provide gender-affirming surgical care. Our program offers several gender-affirming surgical procedures, and the Transgender Health Program also offers primary care services and gender-affirming hormone therapy. We will work with you to develop a safe and comprehensive surgical plan that aligns with your goals. Please keep in mind that, depending on your procedure, the process can be lengthy. We ask for your patience while we work with you to ensure that, together, we complete all pre-operative and insurance-related requirements. You can contact the MGH Transgender Health Program at 617-643-7210. If you have questions regarding the surgical process, you may talk to us on the phone or send us a message via patient gateway. We will help you navigate through this process and look forward to meeting and working with you!

## WHO WE ARE

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### Clinical Staff

**Leah, RN** – Dedicated Gender-Affirming Surgery Program Surgical Nurse

**Candace Nguyen** – Surgical Program Coordinator

**Heather Parker, NP** – Nurse Practitioner with Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery

### Surgeons

**William “Jay” Austen, Jr. MD, FACS** - Top Surgery

**Branko Bojovic, MD** - Facial Feminization, Facial Masculinization

**Eric Fjeld** – Scheduler for Dr. Bojovic

**Curtis Cetrulo, MD** - Phalloplasty, Metoidioplasty, Top Surgery

**Ariella Bernkopf** – Scheduler for Dr. Cetrulo

**Richard Ehrlichman, MD** - Top Surgery

**Mary Little** – Scheduler for Dr. Ehrlichman

**Milena Weinstein, MD** –Vaginoplasty, Vaginectomy, Hysterectomy

**Jonathan Winograd, MD** - Vaginoplasty, Top surgery

**Jenn McGonagle** – Scheduler for Dr. Winograd

**Anton Wintner, MD** – Phalloplasty, Orchiectomy, Vaginoplasty

## REQUIRED STEPS

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### 1. Consultation with the Transgender Health Program

Before we schedule a consult with your surgeons, we have new patients meet with a general provider in the Transgender Health Program. In this visit, the doctor will ask about your medical and surgical history, answer any questions you may have about the surgical process, and ensure that documentation, such as letters of support, are in place. This visit helps us ensure that no issues arise farther down the line, either medically or with your health insurance. If the doctor identifies any concerns, they may refer you for testing or to another specialist or have your follow-up with your primary care provider.

### 2. Letters of Support

Before proceeding with a surgical consult, we need two letters of support written by licensed behavioral health providers (Therapists, social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, etc.) to be on file per WPATH standards of care and insurance requirements. You can fax us your letters at 617-724-7126 or email them to us at [MGHTransHealth@mgh.harvard.edu](mailto:MGHTransHealth@mgh.harvard.edu). If you have patient gateway, you can also send letters to us that way. If your letter-writers have any questions about writing these letters, let us know – we can make sure the letters will meet all requirements. Please also let us know if you need help finding a provider to write a letter for you – we may be able to help.

### 3. Surgical Consultation

Once a Transgender Health Program provider has determined you're ready for a surgical consultation and we've received your letter(s) of support, the Transgender Health Program will refer you to the surgeons' office. Then they will reach out to schedule an appointment. To create a comprehensive and safe surgical plan, you will meet with Dr. Bojovic several times before your surgical date.

### 4. CT Scan

After your initial visit with Dr. Bojovic, we will schedule a CT scan of your head for you. This scan provides a picture of your bony and soft tissue structures. Based on this CT scan, Dr. Bojovic creates a 3D model and guides to use during surgery that allows for within a millimeter of accuracy. After your CT scan, you will come in for a second visit to look at the imaging with Dr. Bojovic. Please keep in mind that it can take several weeks to receive the CT scan results and create the guides. At that time, we will schedule your second consult.

### 5. Schedule Surgery Date

Once you and your surgical team have developed a safe surgical plan that aligns with your goals and you've completed all other requirements, it is time to schedule an OR date! It is important to note that due to the complexity of this type of surgery, we will ensure you are medically stable and the whole team agrees with a safe and detailed plan before proceeding with surgery.

## CHECKLIST

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- ☐ One year on Hormone Replacement Therapy
- ☐ Pre-surgical assessment with the Transgender Health Program (\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)
- ☐ One letter of support from mental health providers on file  
(#1 \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)
- ☐ Once confirmed, surgical consult (\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)
- ☐ CT Scan (\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)
- ☐ Second and possibly third per-operative visit with the surgeon  
(#1 \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_) (#2 \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)
- ☐ Schedule surgery date
- ☐ Pre-operative phone call and COVID test (\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)
- ☐ Surgery! (\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)
- ☐ Post-operative visit with the surgical team (\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)
- ☐ Second stage of surgery once recovered (\_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_)

## **FACIAL MASCULINIZATION OVERVIEW**

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Facial Masculinization, or FMS, is a combination of procedures that allow you to have a face that is more aligned with your gender identity. Various surgical procedures are available to you, including forehead, jaw, chin, and cheek contouring, rhinoplasty, and septoplasty. Depending on your desired outcome, jaw and chin implants are available. You and your surgeon will discuss your goals and come up with a surgical plan together. Before surgery, you will meet with Dr. Bojovic several times to create a safe and comprehensive surgical plan aligned with your goals and desires. After your first visit, you will get a CT scan of your head. Based on this scan, Dr. Bojovic works with an engineer to create 3D modeling and guides for surgery. Dr. Bojovic will review these guides and results with you during your second visit. Sometimes, a third visit is required to discuss final planning steps. Facial surgery is so complex and delicate. Therefore, Dr. Bojovic will perform these procedures in multiple stages. This staged approach allows for the safest possible surgical plan and allows for more control over the final result of your surgeries. After each stage, you will stay in the hospital for several hours or overnight for observation before you go home. Your care team will give you specific discharge instructions on post-operative care, depending on what type of surgery you had. You will follow up with your surgeon in the plastic surgery office about one to two weeks after surgery. You will then begin to discuss the next stage of your operative plan.

## WHAT TO EXPECT–FACIAL MASCULINIZATION

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Please consider the following as general instructions to give you an idea of what to expect. Since facial Masculinization surgery is highly individualized, each recovery will look a little bit different. It is essential to listen to the specific instructions given to you by your surgeon. Generally, you will stay in the post-procedural recovery room for up to 24 hours to observe any possible complications. As long as you are medically stable and your pain is well controlled, your care team will discharge you from the hospital. You can always call the office with any post-operative questions at (617) 726-8554.

### Hospital Stay

- Since surgeons perform FMS procedures in small stages, it is typical that you will only remain in the recovery area for a few hours after surgery.
- Occasionally, you may need to stay overnight for observation.

### Dressings and Wound Care

- Specific dressings and wound care will differ depending on the procedure. Please refer to the specific instructions given to you after surgery
- You will likely have drains in place for several days after surgery.
- You may have sutures that a provider will need to remove in the office.
- Take care to keep incisions as clean and dry as possible. After showering, pat your incisions dry or allow them to air dry.
- Do not use any creams or lotions on your face until cleared by Dr. Bojovic.

### Movement and Use

- No heavy lifting or strenuous activities that would raise your heart rate or cause you to break a sweat until your surgeon has cleared you.
- Please avoid bending over, lifting, or strenuous activity until cleared by your surgeon.
- Walking is encouraged and should be started once you get home.
- Walk for 10 minutes four times a day, even if it's just up and down the hallway. Listen to your body and your pain level.
- Return to work depends on your type of employment and can be discussed at your post-op appointment

# MGH Transgender Surgical Program

## Facial Masculinization Surgery

### Mental Health

- It is difficult to predict the way that surgery will affect an individual's mental health.
- It can take time for you to adjust to your new body after surgery, which may lead to some emotional distress and confusing feelings.
- It is important to have a support system in place, consisting of people who are aware that you are undergoing surgery, including any mental health providers you may be working with.
- If you experience a decline in your mental health or any emotional distress throughout the process, please let your surgeon know.

### Pain Control and Medication

- You will likely be prescribed pain medications. Take them as needed for pain. As your pain decreases, you will be able to reduce the use of the narcotic pain medication and control pain with Tylenol only. Do not exceed 4 grams of Tylenol daily.
- Narcotic medications often make people constipated. Please take a stool softener (Colace) while taking narcotic medications. You may also use other over-the-counter stool softeners.
- Do not drive or operate machinery while taking prescription pain medication.
- Unless approved by your surgeons, do not take Ibuprofen, Aspirin, Aleve, Naproxen, or Motrin for two weeks after surgery, as it may lead to bleeding.
- You may need to take Sudafed after jaw or nasal surgeries to prevent congestion. Please refer to your personalized post-operative instructions.

### Follow-up Routine Care

- We will see you in the plastic surgery clinic for your follow-up appointments. The frequency will vary on how well you are healing.
- Surgical planning for the subsequent stages will occur during your post-op appointments.

### Smoking Cessation

- Nicotine and cigarette smoking interfere with wound healing. Secondhand smoke exposure also exposes you to nicotine. Therefore, we highly recommended that you remain nicotine/smoke-free for six months after surgery.

### Questions and Concerns

- If you experience fever greater than 100.4 degrees, inability to keep down fluids for >24 hours, foul-smelling drainage from your wounds, uncontrollable pain, or any other concerning symptoms, call our office at 617-726-1915.
- If it is an evening or weekend, call our office at 617-726-2000 and ask to speak with the on-call Plastic Surgery resident.
- If you are unable to reach us, please come to Massachusetts General Hospital Emergency Room if feasible otherwise, please go to your nearest hospital.