

2023 JHCTH Mental Health Evaluation for Surgical Readiness Criteria

If you are ready to move forward with a gender affirming surgery, you will need to have a mental health surgical readiness letter. This letter is needed by the **Johns Hopkins Center for Transgender Health (JHCTH)** and **your insurance**. It is also a requirement of the **World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH)**. This letter must be written by someone who treats mental health (ex. A therapist, counselor, Psychiatrist, etc.)

All Letters Must Include:

- The date the letter was written. Letters expire after 12 months.
- The exact surgery you would like to have (ex- bilateral mastectomy, hysterectomy, facial feminizing surgery, etc.)
- How long you have been living as your affirmed gender.
- The qualifications and licenses of the person writing your letter.
- The contact information of the person writing your letter.

Recommended by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health

- The name on your insurance policy.
- Your affirmed name, and pronouns.
- Your date of birth.
- Your sex assigned at birth.
- Your gender identity.
- Any physical health or mental health diagnoses.
- Your support system, i.e. Family, friends, your living situation.
- Your employment and/or status as a student.
- A statement that you meet the criteria that makes this surgery necessary.
- A statement that you can give **informed consent**. Informed consent is that you agree to a medical procedure because you have been given all the facts, including the potential risks, of the surgery.

Recommended by the Center for Transgender Health

- A summary of your personal history.
- Any medications you take, including hormone replacement therapy.
- Amount of time you have thought about having this surgery.
- Legal steps you have taken to transition.
- How you cope with stress.
- We encourage you to talk with this mental health provider about continued support after surgery.
- For bottom surgery:** As these kinds of procedures directly affect your ability to be a biological parent, we encourage you to have a conversation with this mental health provider about family planning and fertility preservation options.

The letter can be addressed to:

Dr. Fan Liang
Johns Hopkins Center for Transgender Health
600 N Wolfe St, Carnegie 136
Baltimore, MD 21287

Please email a copy of your letter to JHCTH@jhmi.edu or to the social worker, Romy Smith on MyChart. The letter can be faxed to **(410) 367-2055**.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is WPATH?

WPATH stands for the World Professional Association for Transgender Health. It is a professional organization that is dedicated to the research and healthcare of Transgender and Gender Diverse people. The WPATH Standard of Care is what the JHCTH team follows when treating patients. For more information, please scan the QR code on this page with your cellphone camera.

Why do I need this letter?

The JHCTH team needs to understand your unique situation. We want to make sure that you are as healthy as possible, in body and in mind, for surgery. It is important to make sure that you have support before and after your surgery- from friends, family, and your health providers.

If I have a mental illness or chronic illness, can I still get surgery?

Yes. We do not deny patients surgery if they have other health conditions. It is important that any condition or illness you have is being managed to avoid risks or complications when you are recovering.

Who can write this letter?

Your letter has to be written by a person who provides counseling or therapy. Sometimes insurance companies want a letter written by a doctoral level provider. A doctoral level letter **is not** a letter from your medical doctor. This is a letter from a therapist or counselor who has extra training.

If you need to provide two letters for your surgery, these letters should be written by two different mental health professionals.

How many letters do I need?

In general:

- For top surgery, you need one letter. Sometimes your insurance will ask for two letters.
- For bottom surgeries, including a hysterectomy or orchiectomy, you will need two.

Where can I find more information about my letter requirements?

You can call the phone number on the back of your insurance card and ask your insurance company directly! The JHCTH team will also review your insurance and tell you what your specific insurance requirements are.

What do I do if I can't find someone to write my letter?

If you cannot find someone to write your letter, please reach out to the JHCTH team! Romy, the social worker, can give you resources to get connected with a therapist.

The QR codes below can be scanned with your cell phone camera for more information.



WPATH Standards of Care



**Center for Transgender
Health Home Page**