

## Upper Surgery FAQs For Referring Providers/Waiting Clients

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- 1. My client is/I am waiting for surgery with Dr. Bowman. When will it be?**
  - Dr. Bowman is currently on leave and has not been performing gender surgeries since October 2016.
  - Dr. Bowman's leave was unplanned and at this time he has not scheduled a return date.
  
- 2. Is there another surgeon my client/I can see instead?**
  - Dr. Chris Taylor and Dr. Jennifer Robinson, located in Victoria BC, were trained by Dr. Bowman. They are both very experienced plastic surgeons and been performing gender-affirming upper surgeries for the last two years.
  - **At this time Dr. Bowman's office continues to manage the central waitlist for chest surgeries and referrals should continue to be sent there.**
  - If a patient prefers to have surgery in Victoria, please note it in the referral.
  - Dr. Chris Taylor and Dr. Jennifer Robinson work from the central list at Dr. Bowman's office and book patients for consult in the order the referral was originally received.
  - At this time, we are not aware of other publicly funded surgeons in BC offering the same procedure: mastectomy with chest contouring.
  
- 3. My client has/I have had surgery but is waiting for a surgical revision? When will it be?**
  - Clients who require revisions are currently being seen by a locum through Dr. Bowman's office.
  - Dr. Bowman does not have a locum for chest or breast surgeries.
  - Patients who have recently received gender-affirming surgery from Dr. Bowman will receive any needed follow-up care by the Vancouver Division of Plastics.
  
- 4. My client is/I am already on the waitlist with Dr. Bowman but would like to see a Victoria surgeon. What should I do?**
  - You can notify Dr. Bowman's office of this change. The staff will forward the referral to the Victoria surgeon of your choice.
  - Dr. Chris Taylor and Dr. Jennifer Robinson work from the central list at Dr. Bowman's office and book patients for consult in the order the referral was originally received.
  
- 5. Is there a difference in wait time for Dr. Taylor vs Dr. Robinson?**
  - Dr. Taylor and Dr. Robinson perform surgeries together, while their consult appointments are separate. Their offices work together to ensure the total wait time (wait for consultation plus wait for surgery) are as equal as possible.
  
- 6. What's being done to address the long wait times for these procedures?**
  - The number of upper surgeries performed has been increasing each year. In 2016/17, 90 upper surgeries were completed, compared with 56 the year before. In fiscal years before that time (since 2012), only 30-38 surgeries were performed.
  - This fiscal year (2017/18), we expect approximately 90 surgeries to be completed, if Dr. Bowman does not return to work.
  - Wait times for surgery will fluctuate depending on available surgeons and operating room time. Currently, the wait time from referral to surgery is multiple years.



- Trans Care BC is working with regional health authorities and existing surgeons to train other surgeons to offer these procedures, and increase the number of surgeries performed to reduce wait times.

**7. Will Dr. Taylor and Dr. Robinson see clients with a higher BMI?**

- For clients already waiting for surgery with Dr. Bowman, Dr. Taylor and Dr. Robinson will see clients with a BMI that is less than 35. For now, clients with a BMI 35 or higher will remain on Dr. Bowman's surgical waitlist.
- Trans Care BC is working with BC surgeons to see how we can evolve current practice to make best surgery available for those in a higher BMI, where it is medically safe to perform this procedure.

**8. My /My client's BMI is less than 35 but higher than 32. I was told I am/they are not eligible to have surgery in Victoria. Has this changed?**

- Yes. While a lower BMI is recommended for surgery, Dr. Robinson and Dr. Taylor will consider surgery for clients with a BMI of up to 35. If you/your client has a BMI between 32 and 35 and would like to see Dr. Taylor or Dr. Robinson, ensure this information is included on your referral or call Dr. Bowman's office to update your surgeon choice.
- Dr. Robinson and Dr. Taylor's offices will follow-up with clients previously referred to their offices who have a BMI between 32-35 to determine next steps for surgery.

**9. Is there any travel assistance available to have surgery in Victoria?**

- Hope Air ([www.hopeair.ca](http://www.hopeair.ca)) provides travel assistance for eligible clients who are required to travel for care. The assistance is based on financial need.
- BC also offers travel assistance through the Medical Services Plan (MSP) Travel Assistance Program (TAP)
  - <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/accessing-health-care/tap-bc/travel-assistance-program-tap-bc>
- If you are approved for TAP, you may also qualify for a Request for Non-local Medical Transportation Assistance
  - <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/policies-for-government/bc-employment-assistance-policy-procedure-manual/forms/pdfs/hr3320.pdf>

If you're having any trouble navigating travel assistance funding, you can contact Trans Care BC health navigators at 1-866-999-1514 or <http://transhealth.phsa.ca/about/contact-us>

**10. How will I/my client know when Dr. Bowman has returned?**

- When Dr. Bowman returns, the office will begin contacting clients regarding next steps.

**11. I've had trouble connecting to Dr. Robinson/Dr. Taylor/Dr. Bowman's office. Who do I contact for updates about my/my client's referral or surgery?**

- If you/your client is scheduled for consult or surgery, connect with the appropriate surgeon's office first.
- If you need further assistance troubleshooting, please contact Trans Care BC at 1-866-999-1514.
- Trans Care BC is working with regional health authorities and the existing surgeons to streamline the waitlist management process for upper surgeries with a goal of improving clarity for patients and their providers.