

## PLASTIC RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

- 1. REASON FOR ISSUE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive establishes policy for conducting plastic reconstructive surgery.
- 2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES:** This Directive is being revised to become a permanent directive and provide updated responsibilities.
- 3. RELATED ISSUES:** VHA Handbook 1102.01.
- 4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** The Deputy Under Secretary for Health for Operations and Management (10N), National Surgery Office (10NC2), is responsible for the contents of this Directive. Questions may be addressed at 202-461-7130 or referred to [vhaconso@va.gov](mailto:vhaconso@va.gov).
- 5. RESCISSIONS:** VHA Directive 2009-051, dated October 20, 2009, is rescinded.
- 6. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA Directive is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of February 2019.

Robert A. Petzel, M.D.  
Under Secretary for Health

**DISTRIBUTION:** E-mailed to the VHA Publication Distribution List 02/25/2014.

**PLASTIC RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY**

**1. PURPOSE:** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Directive establishes the policy for conducting plastic reconstructive surgery. **AUTHORITY:** 38 U.S.C. 7301(b).

**2. BACKGROUND:** Plastic reconstructive surgery consists of those surgical procedures performed for the revision of external bodily structures which deviate from normal either from congenital or acquired causes.

**3. POLICY:** It is VHA policy that plastic reconstructive surgery is performed only for procedures deemed medically necessary.

**4. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

a. **National Director of Surgery.** The National Director of Surgery is responsible for maintaining a list of all VA medical facilities with the necessary capability to serve as referral centers from other facilities for plastic reconstructive surgical procedures. This list will be updated periodically and made available to all VA medical facilities.

b. **Veterans Integrated Service Network Director.** The Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director is responsible for ensuring that capability exists for providing plastic and reconstructive surgical procedures for patients within the VISN.

c. **Medical Facility Director.** The medical facility Director is responsible for ensuring that plastic and reconstructive surgical procedures, when performed, are not undertaken exclusively for cosmetic purposes.

**5. REFERENCE:** 38 CFR §17.38, Medical Benefits Package.

**6. DEFINITIONS:**

a. **Medically Necessary.** Medically necessary is defined in accordance with Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §17.38. Care referred to in the “medical benefits package” will be provided to individuals only if it is determined by appropriate health care professionals that the care is needed to promote, preserve, or restore the health of the individual and is consistent with generally accepted standards of medical practice.

b. **Promote health.** Care is deemed to promote health if the care will enhance the quality of life or daily functional level of the Veteran, identify a predisposition for development of a condition or early onset of disease which can be partly or totally ameliorated by monitoring or early diagnosis and treatment, and prevent future disease.

c. **Preserve health.** Care is deemed to preserve health if the care will maintain the current quality of life or daily functional level of the Veteran, prevent the progression of disease, cure disease, or extend life span.

d. **Restore health.** Care is deemed to restore health if the care will restore the quality of life or daily functional level that has been lost due to illness or injury.