

## **The Office of Vermont Health Access Medical Policy**

**Subject:** Panniculectomy

**Last Review:** 4/23/09

**Revision 3:**

**Revision 2:**

**Revision 1:**

**Original Effective:** 4/23/09

**Technical Revision:** 09/08/09

### **Description of Service or Procedure**

Panniculectomy is the removal of the excess skin or fat overhanging from the abdomen.

### **Disclaimer**

Coverage is limited to that outlined in Medicaid Rule that pertains to the Beneficiary's Aid Category. Prior Authorization is only valid if the beneficiary is eligible for the applicable item or service on the date of service.

### **Medicaid Rule**

[7102](#) Prior Authorization

[7103](#) Medical Necessity

[7310](#) Cosmetic Surgery "Cosmetic surgery and expenses incurred in connection with such surgery are not covered...For example, the exclusion does not apply (and payment would be made) for surgery...for therapeutic purposes that coincidentally serves some cosmetic purpose. In questionable cases, authorization prior to performing surgery should be requested from OVHA".

### **Coverage Position**

A panniculectomy may be appropriate for those individuals who:

- Are VT Medicaid beneficiaries on the date of service, AND
- When this surgery is prescribed by a medical provider active with the VT Medicaid program who is knowledgeable about the medical necessity of this surgery and who provides medical care to the beneficiary AND
- Who meet the clinical guidelines below.

### **Coverage guidelines**

Panniculectomy is medically necessary when:

- The beneficiary is 18 years of age or older, AND
- The panniculus is a Grade Two or more severe, AND

- Non-healing rashes, infections, abscesses, or non-healing ulcers persist despite aggressive conservative treatment for at least 6 months, AND
- There is difficulty with ambulation and interference with activities of daily living (ADL), for example personal hygiene, AND
- The patient has had a significant weight loss, the individual must be at a stable weight for at least 6 months, AND
- If the weight loss is a result of bariatric surgery, the patient must be at least 18 months post-op

**Grading:**

Grade One: panniculus just barely covers the hairline and the mons pubis, but not the private areas.

Grade Two: panniculus covers the private areas in line with the upper thigh.

Grade Three: panniculus covers upper thigh.

Grade Four: panniculus covers mid thigh.

Grade Five: panniculus covers the knees or beyond.

**Clinical guidelines for repeat service or procedure**

---

Clinical criteria must be met for medical necessity.

**Type of service or procedure covered**

---

Panniculectomy, medically necessary

**Type of service or procedure not covered (this list may not be all inclusive)**

---

- Panniculectomy, cosmetic
- Panniculectomy does not include flap elevation, muscle placcation, or neoumbilicoplasty.
- Abdominoplasty
- Diastasis recti repair

**References**

---

American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). ASPS Recommended Insurance Coverage Criteria for Third-Party Payers. Abdominoplasty and Panniculectomy Unrelated to Obesity or Massive Weight Loss. 2006 Jul. Last updated 2007 Jan. Retrieved April 9, 2009, from [http://www.plasticsurgery.org/Medical\\_Professionals/Health\\_Policy\\_and\\_Advocacy/Health\\_Policy\\_Resources/Recommended\\_Insurance\\_Coverage\\_Criteria.html](http://www.plasticsurgery.org/Medical_Professionals/Health_Policy_and_Advocacy/Health_Policy_Resources/Recommended_Insurance_Coverage_Criteria.html)

American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS). ASPS Recommended Insurance Coverage Criteria for Third-Party Payers. Surgical Treatment of Skin Redundancy for Obese ad Massive Weight Loss Patients. 2006 Jul. Last updated 2007 Jan. Retrieved April 9, 2009, from [http://www.plasticsurgery.org/Medical\\_Professionals/Health\\_Policy\\_and\\_Advocacy/Health\\_Policy\\_Resources/Recommended\\_Insurance\\_Coverage\\_Criteria.html](http://www.plasticsurgery.org/Medical_Professionals/Health_Policy_and_Advocacy/Health_Policy_Resources/Recommended_Insurance_Coverage_Criteria.html)

Panniculectomy. *Breast Health Online*. Retrieved April 9, 2009, from [http://www.breasthealthonline.org/cgi-bin/mwf/topic\\_show.pl?tid=57107](http://www.breasthealthonline.org/cgi-bin/mwf/topic_show.pl?tid=57107)

Spector JA, Levine SM, Karp NS. Surgical Solutions to the Problem of Massive Weight Loss. *World Journal of Gastroenterology*. 2006; 12(41): 6602-6607.

Hayes, Inc. Searchand Summary. *Abdominal Panniculectomy Following Significant Weight Loss*. Landale, PA: Hayes, Inc.; 2009.

---

*The Medicaid Rule only lists coverage availability, it does not guarantee individual determinations of medical necessity. Please check with the appropriate department to determine if the service/item in question is a covered service/item under a particular benefit plan. Use of Medicaid rule is not intended to replace independent medical judgment for treatment of individuals.*

*This document has been classified as public information.*

