



# The Current Landscape of Public Insurance Coverage for Sleep Surgery in Canada

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## INTRODUCTION

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is highly prevalent and surgical procedures to treat OSA are offered by Otolaryngologists. The objective of this study was to review and compare the Canadian public insurance coverage for OSA surgeries.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To compare public insurance coverage between the Canadian provinces and territories for surgical management of obstructive sleep apnea
2. To review the academic literature on Canada's public insurance coverage of surgical treatment for obstructive sleep apnea

## METHODS

Cross sectional study of provincial funding for OSA surgeries in Canada and literature review. Funding details were collected by reviewing fee codes for each province. Surgeries evaluated included: tonsillectomy, septoplasty, uvulopalatoplasty (UPPP) / Laser Assisted Uvulopalatoplasty (LAUP), palatoplasty, pharyngoplasty, base of tongue reduction, distraction osteogenesis maxillary expansion (DOME), genioglossus advancement, maxillomandibular advancement (MMA) and tracheostomy in adults. A literature review was conducted using PubMed, GoogleScholar, and UBC Libraries databases. A hand search was also performed. Keywords included: 'sleep apnea', 'surgery', 'Canada', 'funding'.

## RESULTS

Surgeries that were covered universally across provinces included tonsillectomy, septoplasty, and tracheostomy. Provincial variation exists in health coverage for some procedures (eg UPPP). Although 52 articles were identified in the literature search; none specifically discussed public insurance coverage for sleep surgery in Canada. A hand search of the literature failed to locate additional articles.

## DISCUSSION

Where a patient lives dictates which treatment options are available to them publicly. There is inconsistent coverage across Canada for some OSA specific procedures. Compared to surgeries with multiple indications, OSA specific procedures are generally less likely to be covered and may have strict qualifying criteria. This may create discrepancies in how surgeons bill (i.e. pharyngoplasty vs. UPPP) to avoid strict qualifying criteria. It is difficult to estimate the cost of craniofacial surgery as there are multiple codes in combination for single operation. Furthermore, private fees associated with craniofacial procedures are impossible to predict based on fee code guides. The Saskatchewan guide explicitly mentions that coverage for orthognathic procedures is not provided for: pre-operative radiography, records, planning or splints.

## CONCLUSION

Only procedures with multiple indications are covered universally. Geographical variation exists in coverage and qualifying criteria for OSA specific surgeries. A knowledge gap exists in academic literature related to insurance coverage for sleep surgery in Canada and around the world. Potential to improve patient access through standardization and expansion of surgical coverage for OSA across Canada.

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## RESULTS (FIGURES AND TABLES)

Table 1: Western Canada Public Insurance Status for Sleep Surgical Procedures

Procedure	BC	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba
Tonsillectomy	✓ 250.73	✓ 364.80	✓ 350.00	✓ 310.00
Septoplasty	✓ 382.72	✓ 331.93	✓ 305.00	✓ 320.95
Tracheostomy	✓ 390.00	✓ 392.12	✓ 362.90	✓ 355.30
UPPP <sup>1</sup> / LAUP <sup>2</sup>	✓ 420.98 <sup>1*</sup>	✓ 436.94 <sup>2*</sup>	✗	✓ 480.40 <sup>1*</sup>
Palatoplasty	✗	✗	✗	✗
Pharyngoplasty	✓ 542.97	✓ 436.94	✓ 500.00	✓ 571.15
Hyoid suspension	✗	✗	✗	✗
BOT reduction	✗	✗	✗	✗
DOME	✓	✓	✗	✗
Genioglossus advancement	✗	✗	✗	✓
MMA	✓	✓	✓	✗

\*Specific diagnostic criteria to qualify for coverage

Table 2: Eastern Canada Public Insurance Status for Sleep Surgical Procedures

Procedure	Ontario	Quebec	NS	NB	PEI	NFL
Tonsillectomy	✓ 178.35	✓ 219.10	✓ 95.00	✓ 138.00	✓ 226.52	✓ 178.35
Septoplasty	✓ 293.95	✓ 292.10	✓ 150.00	✓ 192.00	✓ 324.40	✓ 293.65
Tracheostomy	✓ 273.15	✓ 292.10	✓ 100.00	✓ 250.00	✓ 247.04	✓ 273.15
UPPP <sup>1</sup> / LAUP <sup>2</sup>	✓ 239.75 <sup>1*</sup>	✓ 343.55 <sup>1*</sup>	✓ 200.00 <sup>1</sup>	✓ 225.00 <sup>1</sup>	✓ 298.47 <sup>1</sup>	✗
Palatoplasty	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Pharyngoplasty	✓ 360.45	✗	✓ 150.00	✗	✗	✓ 360.45
Hyoid suspension	✗	✓ 344.50*	✗	✗	✗	✗
BOT reduction	✓ 197.45	✗	✗	✓ 62.00	✓ 103.77	✓ 187.95
DOME	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
Genioglossus advancement	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓
MMA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓

\*Specific diagnostic criteria to qualify for coverage

Table 3: Canadian Territories Public Insurance Status for Sleep Surgical Procedures

Procedure	Yukon	NWT	Nunavut
Tonsillectomy	✓ 406.00	✓ 511.73	---
Septoplasty	✓ 580.90	✓ 603.19	---
Tracheostomy	✓ 372.60	✓ 482.58	---
UPPP <sup>1</sup> / LAUP <sup>2</sup>	✓ 702.90 <sup>1*</sup>	✗	---
Palatoplasty	✗	✗	---
Pharyngoplasty	✓ 1006.20	✗	---
Hyoid suspension	✗	✗	---
BOT reduction	✗	✗	---
DOME	✗	✗	---
Genioglossus advancement	✓	✗	---
MMA	✓	✗	---

\*Specific diagnostic criteria to qualify for coverage