

## ABOUT WSPS

The Wisconsin Society of Plastic Surgeons (WSPS) was established in 1959 with the purpose to:

- Stimulate and advance knowledge of the science and art of Plastic Surgery,
- Maintain the art and science of such surgery at the highest standards,
- Hold meetings for exchange of thought, mutual education and discussion of problems peculiar to such surgery for improvement of patient care, and
- Assist in the teaching processes for the training of medical students and resident surgeons.

WSPS is a leader in the state by offering high-quality patient centered plastic surgical education through its annual conference. Members receive timely news and access to resources through the website, email notifications, and interactions between colleagues.

---

## MAINTAINING MICROSURGICAL BREAST RECONSTRUCTION COVERAGE

WSPS joined the American Society of Plastic Surgery in in 2023 in signing onto a letter to Chief Executive Officers of America's Largest Commercial Health Insurers explaining that organizations have seen several commercial health insurance companies introduce categorical changes to their coverage policies for microsurgical breast reconstruction. These changes are triggering disturbing reductions in access to this type of care.

Microsurgical breast reconstruction techniques like deep inferior epigastric perforator (DIEP) flaps are considered an improvement over their predecessor, the transverse rectus abdominis muscle (TRAM) flap. This improved procedure helps a patient return to life quicker and without the higher risk of lifelong disability that comes with the TRAM flap, and it is typically accomplished with just one procedure, unlike reconstruction options involving prostheses. For these and other reasons, microsurgical breast reconstruction is objectively very good for patients, and all should be working to increase access to it.

Yet, planned autologous reconstruction surgeries had already been cancelled as a direct result of policy changes at private health insurance companies. This meant some people affected by breast cancer were forced into treatment plans that differ from their preferred approach, their choice. For some people, no breast reconstruction option was available, because if someone received radiation treatment or needs wide skin resection, that often meant autologous reconstruction was their only option. We found that deeply concerning and asked that they please reverse course and ensure every person who receives a mastectomy has all reconstructive approaches available as a treatment option.

Microsurgical breast reconstruction offers tremendous advantages to patients and to the health system through the quality of outcomes associated with it and reported patient satisfaction; we have experts, advocates, and patients who are committed and ready to talk in detail about those advantages. WSPS is proud to have been successful in stopping the implementation of the new coding changes, allowing many women to continue having access to breast reconstruction and going to their preferred provider to seek these surgeries .