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February 3, 1986

Louis G. Sullivan
[redacted] Page St.
San Francisco, CA 94117

Dear Louis:

We received your inquiry for information about the Gender Identity Program at the University of Virginia Medical Center.

This program was established in 1971 to assist persons with any form of gender dysphoria, including transsexualism. The University of Virginia Gender Team consists of doctors and health professionals representing plastic surgery, urology, gynecology, psychiatry, psychology and endocrinology.

Referrals are accepted from candidates who provide the following documents:

1. A letter of recommendation for consideration of sex reassignment surgery from the local psychiatrist.

2. Records of any prior treatment or surgery related to the candidate's gender dysphoria.

3. A statement from the physician who is currently prescribing hormones for you (if any).

4. Legal proof of name change on important documents such as social security card, driver's license and major credit cards.

5. A letter of support for the chosen gender from your employer and/or job counsellor.

6. A letter of support from a family member and/or close friend.

7. A brief autobiography.

8. Completed questionnaire.

You can do important things prior to our actual consideration of you as a surgical candidate. This will save time and expense for you. Our recommendations are as follows:

Certain requirements might be waived in case you can have your records transferred from another gender identity program.

Local Psychiatrist. It is essential that you establish a therapeutic relationship with a qualified psychiatrist or a licensed clinical psychologist. Self-exploration is necessary to delineate the reasons for surgical intervention for gender problems. You should allow a 12 month period of therapy prior to seeking admission to the program for surgery. Stressful situations will arise before, during, and after gender change operations. Professional psychiatric support is essential during gender identity transition. Without a psychiatric referral, you cannot be accepted into the program. Most people need continued counselling, especially after return to the community following surgery.

Hormone Therapy. Hormone treatment can be initiated with the assistance of the treating psychiatrist. A hormone program is an active step towards gender change and may increase emotional stability. The effects of hormone therapy are largely (though not completely) reversible in case you decide that gender change is not the treatment of choice.

Emotional Support. When you are comfortable with the decision to pursue surgical treatment, it is important to explain your intention to people close to you. Emotional support from friends, family and professionals will help to carry you through the difficulties. The psychiatrist can assist you in approaching those who do not understand the medical problem.

When the first three steps are completed, you are ready to prepare for other changes which will result from gender reassignment:

Employment. At the appropriate time, you must decide how to handle your work situation. Surgery requires you to be financially stable. Most people resolve their gender problems within their existing work situation. Letters from physicians, and your own tactful explanations encourage co-workers and employers to accept the new gender and maintain current work relationships. A surprising majority of people, if given time, understand the situation, and will be glad that you are finally finding some peace and resolution in your life.

Legal. Legal matters need attention in relationship to work and to personal ties, such as marriage. A legal name change can be obtained prior to surgery which will help you in the trial period of cross living. Consideration, however, should be given to this step where insurance coverage is concerned. If you proceed with legal name change, all documents can be changed

prior to surgery except the birth certificate. This will facilitate your admission to the hospital with the name and gender of your choice. A letter from the treating physician, validating change in gender after surgery will then allow application for a new birth certificate.

Trial Living. After diagnosis by your psychiatrist, if you have not already done so, you can begin a trial period of cross-living. This simply means that you dress, work and totally live in the desired role. Establishing yourself by actually living in the chosen gender is the most important test of your ability to realistically be happy and productive in that role. Road blocks will appear, but most people are able to meet these successfully once they are finally living in the dominant gender. We expect you to cross-dress for 12 to 18 months prior to evaluation or acceptance for surgery.

Not every patient wishing a gender change will be a true transsexual and some transsexuals are not suitable candidates for operation. Others become suitable only after a period of counselling and self examination. You must give yourself and your doctors sufficient time to guide you through this irreversible process.

Variations of each stage of the transition may be encountered by each candidate. You may feel resistance from friends, family and acquaintances. However, this may help you delineate feelings and thoughts about gender transition. It is encouraging to know that there are others in your situation.

The following organizations may be of assistance to you, they will send you literature and information on request.

I. Janus Information Facility and
Harry Benjamin International
Gender Dysphoria Assn., Inc.
1952 Union Street
San Francisco, CA 94123
Director, Paul A. Walker, Ph.D.
ph. (415) 567-0162

II. Erikson Educational Foundation
Ojai Valley Country Club
716 Country Club Road
Ojai, CA 93029

Finally, we suggest that you seek qualified professional help from a recognized interdisciplinary gender identity team. This is not a type of medical care that should be obtained from solo physicians, working in community hospitals. Complications are not uncommon with surgery of this type and if they occur you will want experienced continuing care.

The Gender Identity Clinic of the University of Virginia requires a 2 to 3 day evaluation period. After receipt of the candidate's autobiography, the completed questionnaire, the letter of support from a relative or close friend, a statement of the physician prescribing hormones, and the local psychiatrist's referral letter, appointments will be scheduled by our Gender Identity Team coordinator, M. W. Langman, ps. dra. She can be reached by letter at the Gender Identity Program, Box 203 University of Virginia Hospital, Charlottesville, Virginia 22908. Phone referrals from your psychiatrist are helpful, but we must also have the written materials. The time of receipt of these documents will determine the priority for surgical time, once the work-up is complete.

During the evaluation at the medical center, you will be interviewed and examined by each member of the team and undergo a series of psychological tests. Your questions can be answered by team members at that time.

Team Evaluation: Fees for the total initial work-ups are $600.00. As insurance does not cover clinic expenses, all fees must be paid at the time of each consultation in the form of cashiers checks or traveller's checks. Charges include consultations with each medical team member and a complete psychological evaluation.

METHOD OF EVALUATION AFTER INITIAL WORKUP:

Members of the Gender Team will review the findings and offer recommendations concerning your suitableness as a surgical candidate. You and your local psychiatrist are notified of these recommendations. Further psychotherapy, cross-living, feminization or masculinization may be recommended prior to surgical consideration. The team will certainly not wish to delay your surgery, once you are judged to be ready.

Waiting Period: If you are accepted for operation, a surgery date is assigned. A waiting period of 6 months should be anticipated as the clinic receives more patient applications than can be processed.

Fees: Professional fee deposits are required prior to the actual surgery and will be discussed with the patient during the evaluation once the exact nature of the needed surgery is determined. Candidates are encouraged to apply for assistance through their own health insurance carriers, however, most insurance companies have still not agreed to cover this type of surgery.

Since third party insurance coverage is unpredictable, all candidates must deposit $3,000.00 to the hospital at the time of each admission. Cashiers checks are made out to the University of Virginia Hospital.

An additional deposit of $2,000.00 to cover the initial part of the surgeon's fees must be sent to the University of Virginia Health Services Foundation or to the coordinator, M. W. Langman, ps. dra., no later than two weeks prior to scheduled admission and surgery. The final professional fees may be greater or less than this amount depending on the extensiveness of the surgery, the presence or absence of complications and the amount of post-operative care required.

Just prior to actual surgery you will meet again with the plastic surgeon and his staff to discuss the details of procedures, risks and complications of operation. The surgical team is constantly improving the techniques so as to reduce the number of steps and to minimize hospitalization.

Three to four separate surgical procedures may be required for conversion from female to male genitalia. The professional fee for phalloplasty with or without urethral hook-up varies (approximately $6,000 to $7,000 dollars). Please discuss the fee of each procedure you are seeking with your doctor.

Testicular implants are also sought by some patients. A penile implant may be of value. Additional fees may be required if testicular or penile implants are requested.

Prior to phalloplasty, breast reduction and total hysterectomy are completed.

Hospital costs are billed separately and include room and board, nursing care, operation room charges, anesthesiology, medications, etc.

Approximately 12-18 days of hospitalization are necessary for the first stage of surgery, as well as two shorter admissions in order to complete phalloplasty. This would require your presence in Virginia for approximately three weeks. You would not need to be in the hospital for the entire period. A waiting period between stage 3 and 4 is often desirable to allow the blood supply to improve.

If these arrangements are acceptable, please have your psychiatrist contact our Gender Identity coordinator, M.W. Langman, ps. dra., <u>by mail</u> to make the appropriate arrangements for an evaluation. Any previous records which might facilitate our decision would be appreciated and hopefully speed up the formalities of decision making.

What you are considering constitutes a very important step in your life if you choose to come to the University of Virginia for medical care, we will try to help you make the right decision. If you undergo surgery we will strive to make it a safe and rewarding experience for you.

Thank you for your inquiry. We will look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Milton T. Edgerton, M.D.
Chairman and Professor
Department of Plastic &
Maxillofacial Surgery
Director of Gender Identity Program

MWL:mmd

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