

Cosmetic Medical Procedures Tax: What the Media Says

Media from coast to coast weigh in on Cosmetic Medical Procedure taxes.

“We don't feel as physicians that any procedure should be taxed. We think there are three reasons. No. 1: What's next? The second thing is, it does discriminate against women...The third thing that we have a problem with...is that it certainly strains and dehumanizes the patient-doctor relationship, which is critical.”

CBS News, “Taxing Your Vanity,” quoting Dr. Peter Hetzler, June 3, 2005

“That dismal return has potentially serious consequences for hospitals that treat millions of patients each year who lack health insurance. The cosmetic surgery tax proceeds were supposed to help pay for the hospital ‘charity care.’ The shortfall is being blamed as the reason why [the Governor] is now considering possible cutbacks in the hospital aid next year.”

The Record (Trenton, New Jersey), Feb. 10, 2005

“It makes no sense. Where does it stop – massages, facials, teeth cleanings?”

Los Angeles Times, quoting Karen Wakefield, Feb. 6, 2005

“ ‘Having a baby is an elective service also. Do we want to tax that?’ asked Ms. Vandecar, who took out a loan for a facelift while recovering from facial skin cancer.”

National Post, Jan. 29, 2005

“...in New Jersey, revenues from the tax have fallen 75 percent short of expectations...one reason for the shortfall is the difficulty in defining what constitutes a cosmetic procedure. For example, reducing breast size can have a medical benefit of relieving back pain, while a nose job can improve breathing.”

Chicago Sun-Times, June 20, 2005

“It is the diagnosis, not the treatment, that defines medical necessity. When the state, not your physician, determines what medical procedures may be taxed, what's next? How will patients' privacy be protected when the state audits your medical records? The potential administrative morass is enough to cause a migraine”

“Contrary to the popular belief that cosmetic surgery is the indulgence of the rich, most patients are middle income and seek it out for healthy reasons.”

Seattle Post Intelligencer, Optional Editorial from Drs. Richard Baxter and Phil Haeck, February 10, 2005

“...the line between cosmetic and reconstructive surgery isn't always clear, making it tough to judge who should be subject to the tax. For instance, breast-reduction surgery might relieve back-pain in addition to making a patient look better, while surgery to fix droopy eyelids might also help patients see better, doctors say.”

“In general, health-insurance plans don't cover most elective cosmetic surgery, unless related to a disease, birth defect or accident. Also, patients generally can't include the cost of elective cosmetic surgery as a medical expense deduction on their federal tax returns...and despite the image of plastic surgery as a luxury for the wealthy, many patients have more modest incomes...”

The Wall Street Journal, June 1, 2005

“Vice taxes, vanity taxes. Let's be honest about what these really are: You-have-immoral-and-addictive-habits taxes. You-are-worthless-and-weak taxes. I have-judged-you-and-found-you-wanting taxes.”

Chicago Sun-Times, June 5, 2005