

CORPORATE OFFICE

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Dear community stakeholders,

As you are aware, over the past two years, Horizon has been developing a Smudging Policy under the guidance of the Indigenous Liaison Committee (ILC) and the Population Health team. This was done in consultation with Horizon's ILC, Elders, and you, our key stakeholders.

I am pleased to share with you today, that the policy is now in effect. A copy of the policy is attached to this letter for you to view.

So much work has gone into this, and without your continued support, dedication, and knowledge, it wouldn't have been possible. We are thrilled to finally see it come to life and enhance our health care workers' cultural competency while ensuring the safety and comfort of our patients and clients.

Until the development of this policy, smudging requests had been conducted on an ad hoc basis across Horizon. This formal policy is a significant step towards addressing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action, and it aligns with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, this ties into Horizon's patient and family centred approach to care, and our values.

Aaron Hatty, Horizon's Regional Indigenous Relations Coordinator, and Steve Christie, Horizon's Regional Director of Population Health, presented the policy to Horizon's Executive Directors. The policy was welcomed by leadership and they are thrilled it is available to help staff facilitate a smudging ceremony.

All employees and physicians have been made aware of the Smudging Policy, and Aaron will continue internal promotion at local leadership meetings. Soon, we'll share the news on Horizon's corporate social media channels, as well as issue a news release in the weeks to come.

The disparities and challenges associated with health care service delivery to Indigenous people is well documented, and this is an important step forward in strengthening Horizon's relationship with First Nations.

At a national level, the TRC identified 94 Calls to Action which included **seven** specifically directed to health care of which all levels of government are asked to address. This Smudging Policy is one of the ways we are addressing the Calls to Action at Horizon.

This policy comes at such a pivotal moment in our lives, in combination with the COVID-19 pandemic. While we must focus on navigating the pandemic, it's important our patients, clients and families know they can lean on their spirituality, especially when they are in the hospital.

Sincerely,



Jean Daigle
Vice President of Community
Horizon Health Network

CC: Aaron Hatty, Regional Indigenous Relations Coordinator
Steve Christie, Regional Director, Population Health