



Title: Spiritual and Religious Support - Smudging	
Document #: 2112	Issuing Authority: Director, Quality Utilization Risk Management
Last Revised Date: 7/17/2019	Version Number: 2.0 (Current)

PURPOSE:

To assist Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) staff in order to:

- Provide spiritual and/or culturally appropriate care to patients and their families that request a smudging ceremony.
- Facilitate the procedure to safely perform a smudging ceremony for patients and their families in accordance with BCHS values and best practice guidelines.

NOTE: For the purposes of this policy the term Indigenous and Aboriginal will be used interchangeably.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The BCHS is an inclusive organization that supports the cultural practise of smudging and offers supports and assistance with preparation to Indigenous and Non-Indigenous patients and families when a smudging ceremony is requested. Every effort should be made to assist in making the smudging ceremony possible.

This policy has been written in alignment with Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) "Calls to Action" document. Item #22

"We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian healthcare system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal Healers and Elders where requests by Aboriginal Patient" (TRC, 2015, p. 3).

DEFINITION(S):**Eagle Feather**

Indigenous Peoples regard the eagle as a sacred bird. The eagle represents core values and/or powers such as strength, loyalty, honesty, and compassion. Like all ceremonial objects the eagle feather is always treated with utmost respect. It is common for eagle feathers to be used in sacred ceremonies such as smudging ceremonies.

Elder

Elders may be either men or women. They are considered the carriers of wisdom and teachings rooted within Indigenous culture.

Menstrual cycle or "Moon Time"

An Aboriginal term referring to menstruation. A woman who is menstruating or on "her moon time" may be respectfully requested to refrain from accessing or touching the sacred medicines, as the woman's body is undergoing its own purification process and it

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is believed that this will affect the sacred medicines.

Sacred Medicines

Cedar, sage, sweet grass and tobacco are considered sacred medicines and are used in smudging ceremonies. Only persons who are knowledgeable and experienced with the use of these sacred medicines should handle them. Sacred medicines are not to be cut, damaged or tampered with in any way.

Smudging Ceremony

A spiritually healing ceremony that involves the practice of brushing smoke, created by the burning of sacred medicines, over the body of the participant as a cleansing ritual.

Smudging Kit

In most cases a smudging kit consists of abalone shell, sage, cedar, and traditional tobacco.

Smudge Pot or Shell

Traditionally an abalone shell is used as a smudge pot but earthenware bowls have also been used. The sacred medicines are placed in the shell or bowl and burned to produce the smoke used in the smudging ceremony.

PROCEDURE:

A patient who requests a smudging ceremony should be medically stable and able if they are to be transported or transport themselves to the designated smudging area.

1. Staff Support and Resources for the Process

- a) Spiritual Health Practitioners can be contacted through switchboard to support smudging ceremonies.
- b) Patients and/or their family may perform the smudging ceremony in the Spiritual Health Center (utilizing the front of the chapel space with windows opened) or designated space approved by Engineering.
- c) It may be possible for a patient to smudge in a private room. Patients and/or their family may request assistance from community elders to perform the ceremony.
- d) Aboriginal Patient Navigator may be contacted at 519-750-4323 for additional support.

Patients and/or family members may not participate in the ceremony if they require continuous oxygen (O2) support. Smokeless Smudging may be offered as an alternative.

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2. Room Preparation

- a) Engineering must be contacted prior to a smudging ceremony. This can be done by contacting the shift mechanic through switchboard.
- b) If a ceremony is to take place on site and indoors,
 - i) Acquire an appropriate room for the ceremony, or,
 - ii) The shift mechanic will turn off smoke detectors to safely conduct the Smudging Ceremony.

3. Smudging Ceremony (Appendix A)

- a) In cases where the patient is going to be moved, healthcare professionals (HCP) should assess whether the patient is medically stable prior to leaving the ward.
- b) HCP may be requested or needed to accompany the patient during a smudging ceremony and should do so as they feel comfortable. Some patients and their families may prefer to perform the ceremony in private.
- c) If a ceremony is done in private, staff must discuss and arrange with the patient and their family how to access health care staff during and/or after the ceremony.
- d) Shift mechanic is to be informed when the ceremony is completed in order to activate all necessary smoke detectors.
- e) The ashes are allowed to cool in the smudging bowl or shell and can be removed by the family, as they are to be returned to the earth. *(Staff may also return the ashes to the earth if appropriate i.e. ground and/or garden area).*
- f) Return the smudging kit to the designated area after cooling if supplied by Spiritual Health.

RELATED PRACTICES AND / OR LEGISLATIONS:

Smoke-Free and Tobacco-Free Property Policy

REFERENCES:

LHIN Aboriginal Health Advocacy Group
Truth and Reconciliation Commission, (2015). Calls to Action Document. Retrieved from:
<http://trc.ca>

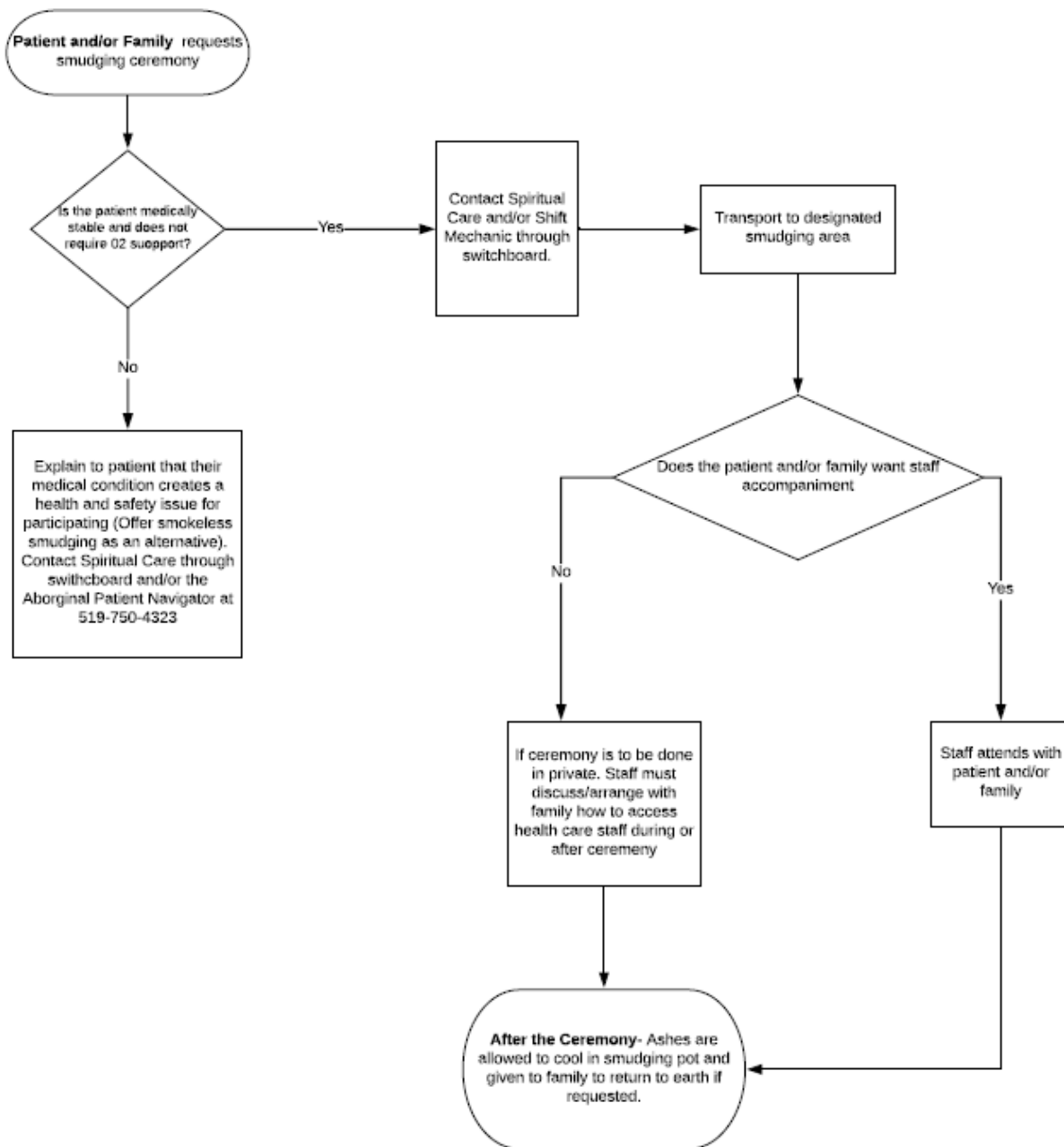
APPENDICES:

Appendix A: BCHS Smudging Flowsheet

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Appendix A: BCCHS Smudging Ceremony Flowchart



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