

 Lakeridge Health <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Harmonized	Facilitation of Smudge Ceremony – Policy and Procedures	
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	Document Applies to: All Lakeridge Health employees, medical staff, volunteers, contractors and students	
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Introduction

A Smudge Ceremony is a spiritual ceremony performed by some First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous (FNIMUI) people that may be requested by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous patients or their families/partners-in-care while receiving patient care at Lakeridge Health (LH). A smudge involves the practice of brushing smoke created by the burning of one or more sacred medicines over the body of the participant as a cleansing ceremony.

Principles:

1. LH respects the spiritual and cultural practices of FNIMUI and non-Indigenous patients, families/partners-in-care.
2. LH honours and recognizes spiritual and cultural diversity.

The purpose of this policy is to assist LH staff to:

- Provide culturally and spiritually appropriate care to patients, their families and partners-in-care that request a Smudge Ceremony.
- Facilitate the procedure to safely perform a Smudge Ceremony for patients, their families/partners-in-care in accordance with LH values and best practices guidelines.

Policy

1. LH recognizes traditional use of tobacco in a prayer offering, smudge, or pipe ceremonies as being integral to spiritual, and cultural way of life. Smudging and ceremonial burning ceremonies are accepted as common practice in LH facilities.
2. LH will facilitate a Smudge Ceremony request from patients, family/partners-in-care with regard for safety.
3. The importance of a Smudge Ceremony is held in the same regard as that of all other spiritual practices.

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4. A Smudge Ceremony is permitted to take place on LH grounds or where the patient is located. As per Smoke-Free Ontario legislation (2017) LH is smoke free. Provincial legislation does outline an Exemption for Aboriginal Peoples Use of Tobacco. This exemption states “Despite the prohibition from smoking in an enclosed workplace or enclosed public place, an Aboriginal person has the right to use tobacco for traditional Aboriginal cultural or spiritual purposes. Aboriginal residents of hospitals (public and private) ... have a right to be provided with an indoor area to use tobacco for traditional cultural or spiritual purposes.”
5. All hospital sites will have one or more identified Smudge Ceremony areas.
 - Identified areas for a Smudge Ceremony will include consideration of existing ventilation and fire safety in consultation with risk management, security, engineering managers, and Occupational Health & Safety.
 - Identified areas are the preferred location however staff will facilitate requests for a Smudge Ceremony in unidentified areas to the extent possible, with regard for safety.
6. A Smudge Ceremony is not permitted in a room in which oxygen is in use.
7. A Smudge Ceremony will follow all Infection Prevention and Control guidelines. Universal safety/infection control precautions will be followed and will take precedence.

Definition(s)

Elder: An individual who is recognized by the community as being the carriers of wisdom and teachings rooted in the Indigenous culture.

Smudging: A tradition, common to many Indigenous people, which involves the burning of a bundle of medicines gathered from the earth. The four sacred medicines used in Indigenous ceremonies include, but are not limited to, tobacco, sage, cedar and sweetgrass. The most common medicines used in a smudge are sweetgrass, sage and cedar. The Smudge Ceremony is one of the cultural spiritual practices used by Indigenous people. There are many ways and variations on how a smudge is done. Historically, Inuit and Métis people did not smudge; however, today many Inuit and Métis people have incorporated smudging into their lives. A Smudge Ceremony provides a sense of peace, clarity and balance.

Procedures

1. Any staff person made aware of a request for the Smudge Ceremony from a patient and/or family member are to contact Spiritual & Religious Care staff directly or through Locating.
2. When the Spiritual & Religious Care staff are contacted and available, they will connect with the patient and/or family making this request to determine all details, including if assistance is required to locate an Elder or Knowledge Keeper.
3. Spiritual & Religious Care staff are responsible to inform all departments impacted prior to or during the ceremony, including Patient Care Managers; Security and Facilities. This will be done in order to work through all details including identifying the location to conduct the ceremony and posting written notices to support the safety and privacy of all involved.

4. While Spiritual & Religious Care staff may not necessarily be required to participate in the Ceremony, they will follow up with the requestor after the event and will document the activity in the patient record.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All staff will:

- Be aware of this policy and associated procedures pertaining to traditional use of tobacco and Smudge Ceremony.
- Support with facilitating Smudge Ceremony requests by referring to Spiritual & Religious Care staff.

Switchboard/Locating will:

- If contacted by staff, patients or their families, connect with Spiritual and Religious Care staff as per on-call practises

Spiritual and Religious Care staff will:

- Facilitate and support requests for Smudge Ceremonies.
- Maintain a supply of bundles available at each hospital.

Patient Care Managers will:

- Establish location specific standard work in compliance with this policy and procedure and communicate to staff.

Security/Environmental Services/Engineering Staff will:

- Support with facilitating Smudge Ceremonies to ensure appropriate precautions for fire safety during the hours when Security/Engineering staff are available to assist with smoke detector response

Patient and/or family/partners-in-care will:

- Coordinate the Ceremony directly with the elder/knowledge keeper, with staff support as required.

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