

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 20, 2024

To: All BCEHS staff

Re: **Bi-monthly Culture Update**

Cliff: 1065957

File: 195-20

I am pleased to provide the first update of the new year on actions being taken to improve our culture. Last week we welcomed Aggie Peel, our new Chief of People Diversity and Culture Officer to BCEHS. Aggie will lead a team that is doing important work on initiatives related to our BCEHS People Plan, and in doing so, help us embrace opportunities to work with each other and serve our patients in a manner the upholds the Coast Salish teachings gifted to PHSA and BCEHS.

Having a dedicated team working to help us achieve a safe, respectful and inclusive workplace that supports and celebrates its employees is key to our growth and improvement as an organization. This team will also lead engagement work with employees across all areas of the organization to get feedback on the draft three-year People Plan and ensure we are getting your input and ideas to help us build the future we want to see at BCEHS. It's an exciting time with many initiatives underway and much still to do!

Other areas of progress

Culture Champions – The first Culture Labs leadership development program launched last week, with 62 participants from across BCEHS. The four cohorts came together for the first time in powerful sessions, sharing information and ideas about how to build the culture we seek and to be part of the important changes needed. This is the first time we have had a leadership development program like this at BCEHS, and the response from participants has been very positive. We are looking to expand the program in the coming months.

Front Line Leaders Forums – The three 2024 front line leaders forums are being finalized, with events running April 23-25 in Victoria for island leaders; April 30-May 2 in Kelowna; mid-late May (TBC) in the Lower Mainland. The focus of these sessions is building strong and supported leaders who are equipped to implement the changes we need to improve our organization and the experience of our employees. More information and details to come soon.

Anti-Indigenous Racism Response Training – Last summer BCEHS announced that all employees could now access two crucial and foundational educational programs that support the organization's commitment eradicating anti-Indigenous specific racism within BCEHS.

Completing both Anti-Indigenous Racism Response Training (ARRT) and San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training courses is mandatory for all PHSA employees, including BCEHS employees, and it is also fundamental to our collective ability to uphold the first of the Coast Salish teachings gifted to us by Knowledge Keeper Sulksun, that of Thee eat, "truth". Learning about and accepting the truth of our country's colonial history will help deepen our cultural awareness, strengthen our commitment to trauma-informed practice, and contribute to a workplace that promotes Indigenous cultural safety and inclusion.

We have more work to do, but below is an update on our progress to date:

- * Since April 1, 2023, 1905 paramedics have registered for San'yas training, which represents 31% of all PHSA registrations.

- * Our San'yas completion rate for paramedics is 92%, which is significantly higher than the national completion rate of 87%.

- * In the last five years, 49.7% of our employees have taken Anti-Indigenous Racism Response training.

Maturn Pilot – We recently announced that BCEHS will be part of a new pilot program that supports mothers and those who identify as mothers, as they navigate through the many challenges that come alongside of managing work and life as a parent. BCEHS has secured 10 spots in the pilot and has seen very strong interest in participating from across the organization. The program is not just for leaders or those who want to be in a leadership role and is for both included and excluded employees across BCEHS. Following the evaluation, if the program is a fit for our workforce, we will be looking to offer future spots.

New Standard Operating Guideline for Assault in the Workplace – We are committed to developing proactive, solutions-focused approaches to help all employees thrive. I am inspired in this work by one of our paramedics who shared a personal experience with me and senior executive clinical operations director, Deb Trumbley, during a station tour in summer 2022. The paramedic had previously experienced an initial traumatic event and then was not supported as she should have been. Her insights helped to shape the new Standard Operating Guideline - Staff Assault at Work: BCEHS Management Responsibilities & Guidance, which was released across the organization and is [available here](#).

With permission and to highlight the significance of this work, I will share that this paramedic experienced a sexual assault by a patient while on the job. At the time, BCEHS had no standard policies or practice to help her or her superiors navigate the situation: our system wasn't set up to help, and ultimately hindered her healing.

Thanks to this individual's determined courage in sharing her story, BCEHS created a working group that included her, as well as members from the BCEHS Risk Management, Human Resources and operations departments. Together, the group developed the Operating Guideline for Assault in the Workplace, which clarifies which processes to follow when providing support to staff who have experienced assault. It also identifies resources available to BCEHS managers to fulfill their obligations and makes clear what support staff will receive from BCEHS.

Continuous improvement

We are working hard to become an organization where front-line employees can share their experiences – positive and negative – and be seen, heard and responded to appropriately and respectfully. The ability to raise deficiencies and be part of the solutions to remedy them is how we learn and grow as an organization.

Thank you again to all of you who have committed yourself to being part of the work of improving our organization, and to those who continue to share their experiences. Our dedicated phone line remains available at 1-877-522-1590 for anyone experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment, bullying, or discrimination. All human resources employees answering the phone line are trauma-informed practitioners that have received training.

Thank you for everything you do for our patients, our communities, and your teams and colleagues every day.

Leanne Heppell
Executive Vice President and Chief Ambulance Officer
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