

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 18, 2023

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To: All BCEHS employees

Re: **Culture Actions Update**

As part of my commitment to provide regular updates on actions being taken to improve our culture, I am pleased to provide my final update for this calendar year, which touches on the BCEHS People Plan engagement sessions, culture champion work, staffing updates and the Respectful Workplace policy.

BCEHS People Plan

Since my October update [[Culture Actions Update](#)], we've been focused on getting feedback on our draft BCEHS People Plan, which sets out timelines and articulates responsibilities and deliverables over the coming three years. It is our organization's first People Plan and it will put our employees first, guide our work and keep us on track and accountable for making the changes needed at BCEHS.

Engagement sessions

So far, BCEHS and PHSA leaders and CUPE 873, as well as the Women in Paramedicine Special Interest Group and the 2SLGBTQIA+ committee have had opportunity to provide feedback on the plan. Engagement sessions open to all employees will be held early in the new year.

In late September, we held a good session for excluded BCEHS leaders across the province. Inside our culture work, the focus was on ways to lead and better support our teams. Two similar events are being planned for early next spring for frontline supervisors and unit chiefs, with broader roll out of the plan and supporting training beginning soon after. The first event is three days of engagement and education for Island-based frontline leaders, April 24-27th in Victoria. The second event will be in the Interior in early May, with more information about dates and location coming soon.

Culture Champions

Recently, we completed the intake process for our first group of BCEHS Culture Champions. This group of 55 employees from across the organization will begin a pilot program in early 2024 that will help develop leadership capacity within BCEHS. Following the pilot, we are planning to expand the program, so stay tuned for more information and opportunities to apply.

We are also continuing the work to build a dedicated team that will support our overall efforts to improve workplace culture. As this team continues to build, we will see significant progress in areas critical to our growth and improvement as a caring, learning, safe and inclusive workplace.

Staffing Updates

- The new position of Chief, People, Diversity and Equity and the Chief Operating Officer competitions both had some very strong applicants. We have completed the interview processes and I am hopeful we will be able to announce the successful applicants soon.

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- I am also very pleased to announce that Victoria (Vicky) White will be joining the team as our first Executive Director, Indigenous Health. Vicky comes from the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation and is a member of the Tseshaht First Nation located on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. As part of our increasing engagement with Indigenous communities and our commitment to culturally safe, client-centred care, we introduced this new leadership role to steer the work of our Indigenous Health Team and provide support to leaders at BCEHS concerning Indigenous Health.

Vicky's education, lived experience, and over 20 years working for and with First Nations communities has given her a deep-rooted understanding of Indigenous ways and being. Vicky's first day at BCEHS will be January 8, 2024.

- We have also recently hired Perpetuah (Pep) Muthui as our first Director, Diversity and Equity. Pep will be joining the team January 8, 2024. Pep comes to BCEHS from the BC Assessment Authority, and has deep diversity, equity and inclusion expertise, including leadership roles at Okanagan College, University of British Columbia and Alberta Health Services.

Respectful Workplace Policy

A review and updating of the Respectful Workplace Policy has now been completed. Training on the revised and strengthened policy will be rolled out in early 2024.

Thank you for your support

Thank you again to all of you who have committed yourself to doing the work needed to improve 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 HR business partners answering the phone line are trauma-informed practitioners that have received training.

We have accomplished much this past year, and there is much more to do, but I am optimistic that the coming year will be one in which BCEHS makes important progress towards becoming a workplace where every employee is able to thrive, to learn, be healthy and safe, and effectively apply their professional expertise to the work they do.

Sincerely,

Leanne

Leanne Heppell
EVP & Chief Ambulance Officer
BC Emergency Health Services