

Frequently Asked Questions for Community Faith Leaders – Spiritual Care within the SHA

We are excited to share with you the new process developed for Spiritual Care Services in Regina and Saskatoon Acute Care. These changes are critical to ensure our compliance with the Health Information Protection Act (HIPA) regulations while still supporting spiritual and religious care for patients.

What changes are happening regarding Community Faith Leaders within the SHA?

Self-declared patient faith lists will be available to Community Faith Leaders in Regina and Saskatoon Acute Care. There are also changes in the process for access to the self-declared patient faith lists and the screening requirements that go with such access. These criteria are based on our compliance with HIPA regulations and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) Privacy Policy.

Can I visit patients from my faith group without being a registered Community Faith Leader or having access to the self-declared patient faith list?

Yes. The SHA encourages Community Faith Leaders to visit someone known to them at any time. It is important for all patients to have access to the spiritual and religious care of their choice.

Will there be changes to my parking access at SHA facilities?

- Registered Community Faith Leaders with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), as well as those who work under their supervision will have access to free parking.
- Those representing their faith group on the 24-hour emergency call list will also have access to free parking.
- We will continue to honour parking for those who currently have such privileges through the previous registration system; however, it will expire on December 31, 2025. If you meet the new registration criteria you must re-register within our new system.

What is the process for collecting the names of patients who want spiritual or religious care?

The Health Information Protection Act (HIPA) requires that we only collect information from our patients that is required to provide care.

- If a patient does not want a visit, then we will not be collecting any information about their spiritual or religious preferences.

Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation,
acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.

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- If a patient has not consented to a visit, then we will not disclose their name and room number to our spiritual and religious care providers.

How does the SHA ensure that a patient's information is protected and adheres to HIPA criteria?

During the inpatient registration process, patients will be asked if they would like the SHA to arrange for a visit from a spiritual care provider during their stay. In compliance with the privacy policy, if the patient says yes, the patient is asked if they would like to provide a religious preference, which includes non-denominational or multi faith. If they say no, then no further questions related to spiritual care are asked.

Further to the privacy policy, any religious preference that the patient provides will be removed upon discharge.

If the patient declined a visit during the registration process and has subsequently changed their mind, they can request a visit through their health-care professional or by calling Switchboard.

Does the SHA support people to access spiritual or religious care?

Yes. It is important for all patients to have access to the spiritual and religious care of their choice. The SHA supports clients, patients and residents to access spiritual or religious care during their time with us.

Patients are encouraged to let their local faith community know when they are in hospital. There are no barriers to faith groups coming to visit. As such, we openly invite all faith groups to come and visit those known to them who want a visit.

What do I need to know before entering a room?

It is best to practice hand hygiene before entering or exiting a patient's room. Please observe the doorway or area around the patient's bed to look for any signage that indicates safety measures that need to be taken before entering or exiting. This may include putting on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as a mask, gloves or gown before visiting. If you have questions or concerns on how to do this properly, please ask staff.

What if I have questions regarding my access to the self-declared patient faith lists?

To comply with HIPA, the self-declared patient faith lists are kept in a locked room with limited access. If you would like to discuss access, please contact Sheri Hillestad Smith, Director of Volunteer Services at 639-471-8785 or email sheri.hillestadsmith@saskhealthauthority.ca.

Additionally, Volunteer Services will be supporting the maintenance of a multi-faith directory to share with patients when requested. This allows patients another avenue to ensure care is accessible. If you would like to be part of this directory, please reach out to volunteers@saskhealthauthority.ca.