

# PUBLIC NOTICE



*File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council*

APRIL 2, 2020

## PLANNING A FUNERAL DURING A PANDEMIC INFORMATION & RECOMMENDATIONS

*(Treaty 4 Territory)* We understand these are tough times, and in the midst of heavy restrictions and uncertainty, losing a loved one can be a difficult process. Planning for funerals during a global pandemic with heavy restrictions will inevitably mean that the process will have to change. Working with Healthcare Professionals, Knowledge Keepers, and Environmental Public Health Professionals, we have developed some helpful information and recommendations to assist you during this difficult time.

Here are some key items for your information and recommendations to consider:

- Maintain a list of participants, with contact information, so if case occurs we are able to track attendees.
- Encouraging ill people or those with high-risk medical conditions not to attend gatherings.
- If people are on mandatory self-isolation, they are not to attend and are not to leave their home.
- Provide hand sanitizer for attendees to use when entering and leaving the building. Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly.
- When people are paying last respects to deceased, **it is recommended to implement viewing only**. The COVID-19 virus can spread from people touching and kissing, therefore families are asked to refrain from this.
- Avoid shaking hands, hugging, and touching each other. Maintain social distancing of 2 metre/6 feet.
- For those special circumstances where one must handle the body (for moccasins, etc.), wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before and immediately after touching the body.
- Limit the number of people in the building to a maximum of 10, 5 is ideal, and increase social distance inside as well as for those who maybe waiting outside, between people to 2 metres/6 feet.
- If tables and chairs are used, ensure that there are only two people per table and separated to allow social distancing.
- When possible, use methods such as skype, zoom, etc. for people to attend virtually.

- If food is served please ensure safe food handling practices are followed:
  - Wash your hands
  - Keep cold foods cold, below 4C
  - Keep hot foods hot, above 60C
  - If foods are placed out for people to take ensure they are individually packed and not out for more than 2 hours. Ideally put out smaller amounts and refill.
  - Eliminating self-serve buffet style eating. Food should be served to attendees or packaged, and ensure that social distancing between people is practiced.

### **Cultural considerations**

It is recommended that you speak to your local Knowledge Keeper, or cultural facilitator. We have compiled a list of things to consider from a cultural perspective, from our Knowledge Keepers.

- Long ago, funerals were held in our homes with immediate family members only.
- That a fire be lit immediately with someone tending over the fire over the following days.
- In instances where proper protocols cannot be followed, you can ask or request this be taken care of through pipe ceremonies with special prayer requests (i.e. in instances where bodies cannot be buried within the cultural time frame).
- In terms of the body it would be smudged and taken care with prayers and/or songs.
- If washing the body, wear PPE at all times.

Another item to consider could be having a small, private funeral with immediate family only, and a larger Celebration of Life Gathering at a later date when it is deemed safe to do so.

**For more information, please call the White Raven Healing Centre: (306) 332-2608  
Toll Free 1-866-748-8922**

We take the health and safety of our people very seriously and have provided these extra precautionary measures to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

*We are asking our members who feel they may be exhibiting symptoms to please call 811 before going to the hospital. As well, a self-assessment tool is available on the Government of Saskatchewan website. For more information, please visit: <http://fhqtc.com/fhqtc-covid-19-updates/>*