



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Self-Identification now in place at Lake of the Woods District Hospital links patients to resources

*Kenora, ON, December 15, 2023* – Lake of the Woods District Hospital (LWDH) this week implemented a way for patients to self-identify as Indigenous if they wish. All patients registered at the hospital are now asked “*Lake of the Woods District Hospital has an Indigenous Patient Relations Department; would you like to self-identify as Anishinaabe or Indigenous?*”

Ray Racette, President & CEO explains “We needed a way to directly link patients with the Indigenous Patient Relations Department. Prior to this question being asked during the registration process Patient Navigators were using their best judgement to determine who might need their support. Now we have the opportunity to connect at the very start of a patient’s journey in the hospital.”

Self-Identification is 100% voluntary and once a patient has answered the question they will not be asked again, and the information will be kept on their record.

Donna Namaypoke, LWDH Cultural Services Manager, elaborates “Rose, Bobby and Shalon are our team of navigators working in the hospital. They support patients with things like ensuring they have access to traditional healing opportunities, translation, discharge planning, prescriptions, and follow up appointments.”

Patients can choose to self-identify with admitting staff during the registration process, by filling out the brief Self-Identification survey online ([Indigenous Self-Identification \(office.com\)](https://www.lwdh.on.ca/indigenous-self-identification)) or at the kiosks available at the main entrances to the hospital.

“This is a great step forward in ensuring health equity for Anishinaabe Peoples,” said Chief Lorraine Cobiness, Board President for Ogimaawabiitong and Chief of Niisaachewan Anishinaabe Nation. “For way too long, our people have faced many challenges navigating the health care system. When we create a safe space for them to immediately connect to the Indigenous Patient Relations Department we are ensuring quality and culturally safe care.”

Lake of the Woods District Hospital and Ogimaawabiitong Kenora Chiefs Advisory have been working in partnership to foster relationships and to improve patient experiences. The result of this work is a blossoming Indigenous Patient Relations Department in our proposed new hospital plans and in our current hospital. For more information or to self-identify visit [Self-identify as Anishinaabe or Indigenous - Lake of the Woods District Hospital \(lwdh.on.ca\)](https://www.lwdh.on.ca/self-identify-as-anishinaabe-or-indigenous)

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