CIVILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

PURPOSE:

Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS) is committed to enhancing the culture of the organization and creating a welcoming environment where every person – patient, visitor, team member, and community member – feels respected and valued, inclusive of identity, role, background, or circumstance. Civility increases safety, reduces stress, builds relationships, and fosters excellence.

POLICY STATEMENT:

BCHS is dedicated to a workplace culture that supports the collective TeamBCHS (Staff, Professional Staff and Volunteers) values of:

- Be Bold and Courageous
- Commit to Excellence
- Champion Equity
- Be Trustworthy

These values serve as a guide for professional practice, behaviours, problem solving, decision making and relationships with one another. These values are nurtured by creating an environment of trust, compassion, and mutual respect for patients and each other. This integration of the Corporate values into daily work ensures that all recognize the impact every member of TeamBCHS has on the Organization's culture and success. Every member has a legal and ethical responsibility to strive to create and maintain an environment free from actions and/or behaviours that would be considered incivility, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination, violence, and bullying. These actions and/or behaviours will not be tolerated. BCHS acknowledges that bullying, harassment, discrimination, and violence are separate issues that require a formalized approach. For the BCHS Violence Policy click here or the Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy, click here.

Civility is the foundation for daily interactions with each other. A healthy and safe work environment is a key enabler to allow TeamBCHS to fulfill the vision of Leading Beyond Care and our mission of "Serving as an anchor for community wellbeing through healthcare excellence." This policy focuses on civility in the workplace, addressing disruptive behaviour and outlining the pathways for resolution.

It is the expectation of all members of TeamBCHS to conduct themselves in a civil, professional, and respectful manner at all times. This policy sets out the expectations for daily interaction between all members of TeamBCHS, and the process for how any disruptive behavior will be handled.

The guiding principle is that interpersonal conflict is best managed promptly between the parties directly when appropriate. The Employer will ensure that tools and resources are available when required.

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INCLUSION CRITERIA

- This policy applies to all members of TeamBCHS (Staff, Professional Staff, Learners and Volunteers).

Exclusion Criteria

This policy does not apply to patients, family members and members of the public. For more information, please click here for the Workplace Violence Policy.

DEFINITION(S):

TeamBCHS – applies to Staff, Professional Staff, Learners and Volunteers and means any of the following:

- A person whether an officer, employees, or independent contractor, who performs or supplies services for monetary compensation.
- Professional Staff who are granted privileges to practice at BCHS.
- Volunteer
- A person who performs services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college, university, or other approved post-secondary institution; or
- Such other person as BCHS may be determined from time to time.

Civility and Respect:

Civility and respect exist in a workplace where individuals treat one another and the communities they serve with dignity, empathy, and cultural awareness. A respectful environment values all voices, acknowledges differences and encourages interactions grounded in equity, inclusion, and mutual respect. It involves being mindful of power dynamics, recognizing diverse lived experiences and fostering belonging for everyone.

Description

When all members of TeamBCHS demonstrate civility and respect:

- We address conflict constructively and respectfully, focusing on solutions and not blame
- We communicate courteously in all interactions, even under pressure
- We give and receive feedback to improve relationships and performance
- We actively listen to colleagues, allowing space for different perspectives
- We show empathy by considering how actions and words affect others
- We build positive relationships by being approachable, respectful and solution-orientated
- We maintain professionalism in tone, word choices, body language and digital communications

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- We demonstrate inclusivity by valuing diverse voices and experiences
- We acknowledge contributions and give credit where it is due
- We support psychological safety by encouraging open dialogue without judgement
- We actively encourage team success by sharing knowledge, ideas and encouragement

Workplace Incivility

Incivility goes beyond a simple lack of courtesy. It involves behaviours that disregard or violate mutual respect, often resulting in tension, harm, or conflict. These actions may be disrespectful, dismissive, offensive, or exclusionary, whether intentional or not. The impact of incivility is shaped by how the behaviour is experienced and perceived by the recipient, particularly in relation to their identity, power dynamics and past experiences in the workplace.

Disruptive Behaviour

Disruptive behaviour means the use of inappropriate words, actions or inactions by a person that interferes with an individual's ability to function well with others to the extent that the behaviour interferes with, or is likely to interfere with, quality health care delivery, patient or workplace safety, recruitment or retention of staff, or the cost of providing health care.

Leadership maintains the right to performance manage and address concerns. A reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the workplace is not Workplace Harassment, Discrimination or Bullying.

Reasonable actions by management include:

- Terminations
- Demotions
- Transfers
- Verbal or written warnings
- Suspension or revocation of hospital privileges
    (i) Changes in productivity expectations
    (ii) Changes in working hours and schedules
    (iii) Absenteeism counselling
    (iv) Communication related to an early and safe return to work program

Any of the above actions may be subject to an appeal process, grievance, and/or arbitration.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are subtle, often unintentional verbal, behavioural, or environmental actions or comments that convey hostile, dismissive, or negative messages toward members of equity-deserving groups. They are rooted in stereotypes or biases related to identities such as race, gender, sexuality, ability, age, or religion.
While they may appear minor or unintentional in isolation, repeated microaggressions can create a cumulative impact that undermines psychological safety, belonging, and equity in the workplace.

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Workplace

Workplace means any location or virtual space where employees work or engage in work-related functions. This encompasses physical buildings, virtual environments and any work-related interactions.

ACCOUNTABILITIES

All TeamBCHS members are expected to contribute to a work environment that is supportive and respectful. It is the responsibility of each member to:

- Review annually and uphold the policies and associated learnings for: Code of Conduct, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention and Civility in the Workplace.
- Ensure that attitudes, behaviours and actions are consistent with the BCHS Civility in the Workplace Policy
- Address behaviours that are inconsistent with the BCHS Values and Code of Conduct by speaking directly with the person in a confidential, and professional manner.
- Not discuss workplace conduct, concerns and conflict with or in front of patients, families and visitors
- Report continued inappropriate behaviours to their Leader.

For the BCHS Leader:

All formal and informal leaders are responsible to help foster a work environment that is supportive and respectful.

It is the responsibility of each Leader to:

(a) Ensure that everyone under their direction, reviews and follows the BCHS Code of Conduct, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policy, and this Civility in the Workplace Policy

(b) Model civility in the workplace

(c) Support all team members to resolve conflict as it arises

(d) Investigate reports of violations of these policies and document

(e) Contact your Human Resources Business Partner (HRBP) when the behaviour falls under the Harassment and Discrimination Prevention policy and/or interventions to address the incident(s) are unsuccessful and/or the disruptive behaviour persists.

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We all have a role to play.

If you're a leader:

- Share how important it is to Choose Civility at BCHS
- Role model civility yourself (Choose Civility)
- Facilitate team discussions about what civility looks like in your team
- Address incivility as it occurs, and reinforce civil, respectful behaviours
- Assume positive intent when addressing incivility
- Make your expectation clear that wherever possible, members of your team should deal with incivility directly, one on one, in a respectful way
- Coach and support the people on your team to address incivility as it occurs among them, step in to assist as necessary
- Follow HR protocols when incivility is reported through RL6

Encourage employees to:

- Role model civility (Choose Civility)
- Engage in team discussions about what civility looks like in a team
- Address incivility as it occurs, and reinforce civil, respectful behaviours
- Try to consider the perspective and experience of others
- Assume positive intent when addressing incivility
- Approach a leader if they need coaching or other supports to address incivility
- Support coworkers to address incivility as it occurs among them
- Provide feedback that is objective and meant to support learning and growth
- Receive feedback gratefully, with an open mind – consider the content
- Plan to have difficult conversations privately, when both parties are calm and ready

PROCEDURE

The BCHS Civility in the Workplace Policy is a protocol for everyone at BCHS. Every individual is accountable for adhering to the protocol and should always attempt to deal with issues timely and professionally. All individuals are encouraged to take time to reflect on the interaction and allow for emotions to settle before determining next steps. Any individual who experiences or observes inappropriate behaviour in the workplace is empowered to address these behaviours that do not align with the values of BCHS. The process for responding to inappropriate behaviour involves four stages. It may not be necessary to move through all four stages, as this will depend on the individuals involved and situation.

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PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH UNCIVIL BEHAVIOUR

An individual may choose to begin the process at Stage 1, 2, 3 or 4 depending on the circumstances of their situation and it is understood that the individual involved is part of the process for resolution.

Stage 1 – **Reflect on the interaction**

What has been contributing to the situation? Take time so emotions can subside. Approach the person directly and ask when a good time would be to connect and discuss the issue. Direct communication begins with talking to the person directly by speaking clearly, respectfully and dealing with issues in a supportive manner.

Stage 2 – Seek Assistance

A. If the issue cannot be resolved because the individual is uncomfortable speaking with the person directly or if the issue was not resolved after a direct conversation, the assistance of a third party may be needed. Speak privately to someone such as Charge Nurse, Supervisor, HR Business Partner, or Organizational Development team member to help develop strategies for speaking to the person about the issue. At any time if the issue is sensitive, consider proceeding to stage 2B.

B. This step is not mandatory, however is intended to provide coaching and support from the direct leader. Coaching is provided to assist the individual in developing an approach for speaking with the person about their behaviour, while enabling the individual to maintain responsibility for resolving the conflict.

If the person the individual has an issue with is their own Leader, follow the steps above and attempt to resolve it directly. If this is not possible, seek assistance from the person who supervises their Leader (e.g. Program Director) or a member of the People and Culture team. This process may include mediation or a facilitated discussion.

*At this stage the Leader will document the situation.

Stage 3 – Escalation to Leadership

At this stage, the responsibility for resolution shifts from the individual to the Leader. Escalating to Stage 3 indicates that issues are significant violations of the Civility Policy or are unresolved from previous stages. In this stage the Leader will be actively involved in resolving the issue. If the employee is unionized the Leader will contact their HRBP and the Union for consult.

The Leader will meet with the person that has identified the concern and engage them in their desired outcome. The Leader will initiate appropriate action within one week of being notified of the

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inappropriate behaviour. The Leader will meet with the individuals involved and any witnesses to gather the facts. The leader will document the investigation process, which includes statements from the individuals and the witnesses. The Leader will determine what should occur to resolve the issue and outlines what is expected of the individuals. The Leader may decide to intervene using development strategies, negotiation and/or mediation, or referral to HR or EFAP. The leader is responsible for ongoing communication with all parties involved regarding the resolution process.

At any time, based on the Leaders assessment they may move to Stage 4.

Stage 4 – Escalation to Human Resources or Medical Affairs

The designated HRBP or Medical Affairs designate will meet with the Leader within one week to review the facts of the situation and actions taken. The HRBP or Medical Affairs will engage the person that has raised the concerns, review the facts and determine appropriate next steps. This could include a more detailed investigation, mediation, and or progressive discipline/ steps towards privileges for Medical Staff. The HRBP and or Medical Affairs designate will make formal recommendations that will be reviewed with the individual and all parties involved.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Annual Review of Code of Conduct, Harassment and Discrimination Prevention, Workplace Violence and Civility in the Workplace policies.
2. Annual completion of the aforementioned e-learning modules.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Resolution Process and Standard Operating Procedure

Appendix B – Senior Leadership Charter

RELATED PRACTICES AND/OR LEGISLATION:

- Code of Conduct Policy
- Harassment and Discrimination Prevention
- Workplace Violence Policy
- Medical Staff Code of Conduct
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Criminal Code of Canada
- Ontario Human Rights Code
- Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 199

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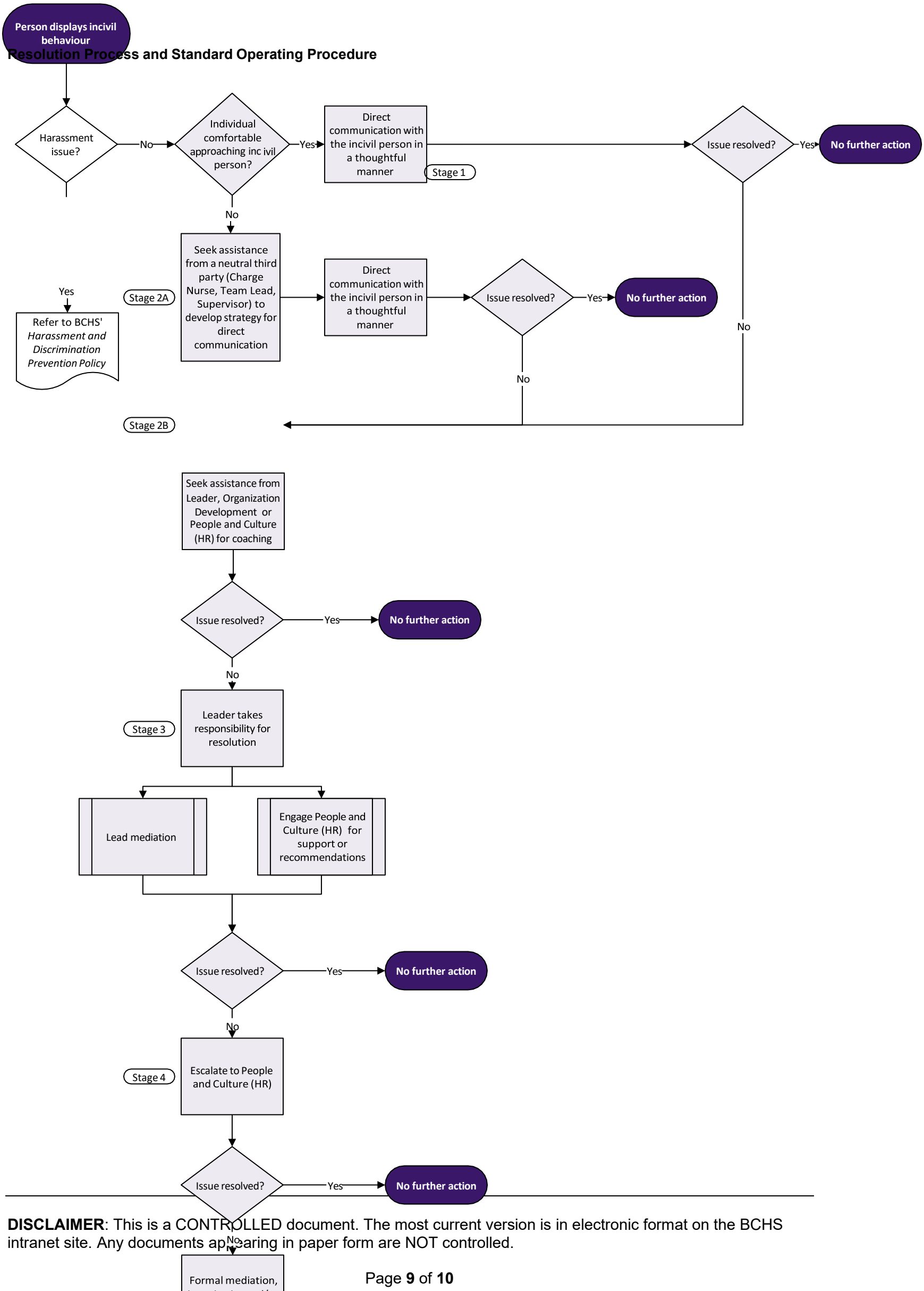
REFERENCES:

To establish this policy, BCHS, has used the following legislation governing workplace harassment and violence in Ontario:

- *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- *Criminal Code of Canada*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*
- *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, 1997

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Civility Policy Algorithm



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OUR PROMISE:

BCHS SENIOR LEADERSHIP CIVILITY AND RESPECT CHARTER

Signed Feb. 2026

To *lead beyond care*, we will create a welcoming environment where every person - patient, team member, or community partner - feels respected and valued inclusive of identity, role, background, or circumstance. This will increase safety, reduce stress, build relationships and foster excellence.

As a member of the BCHS Senior Leadership Team who is committed to building a culture of civility and respect across TeamBCHS, I pledge to:

- Join my fellow senior leaders in actively and visibly advocating for civility and respect in every interaction.
- Build and/or maintain my own self-awareness, emotional self-regulation and interpersonal skills.
- Demonstrate and role model the behaviours I expect from others at all times.
- Check high-level decisions against the value of civility and respect.
- Link civil and respectful behaviours to the goals and priorities of the BCHS 2025-2030 strategic plan.
- Support leaders and teams to reach and maintain a high level of civility and respect across TeamBCHS.
- Engage my peers in supportive 'calling in' conversations when they are not behaving in alignment with this pledge.

Bonnie Camm
President & Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Andrew Burkett
Chief of Staff, Vice President
Medical and Academic Affairs

Stuart Paavola
Vice President, Clinical Services
and Chief Nursing Officer

Erin Sleeth
Vice President, People, Culture
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Alena Lukich
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