Title:  Tobacco as it relates to religious or ceremonial use

PEBB Program Administrative Policy 91-2

Contact:  Policy and Rules Coordinator, ERB Division
Effective:  January 1, 2022
Rescinded:  

Associated RCW:  41.05.065
Laws of 2019, ch. 415, §§ 212 & 939
Supersedes:  N/A

Associated PEBB Board Policy Resolutions:  PEBB 2019-06

Associated WAC:  182-08-015
182-12-300(3)

Assoc. fed law/reg:  45 CFR 146.121(f)
Owner:  Policy, Rules & Compliance Manager, ERB Division

Associated Procedures:  

Associated Forms & Communication:  HCA 50-0100
HCA 51-0205

Approved by:  
Position:  Director of the PEBB Program
Date approved:  August 25, 2021

Purpose:

This policy applies whenever a Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB) subscriber is attesting to an enrolled member’s tobacco use status. The purpose of the policy is to clarify the exception for the religious or ceremonial use of tobacco.

WAC 182-08-015 Definitions: "Tobacco use" means any use of tobacco products within the past two months. Tobacco use, however, does not include the religious or ceremonial use of tobacco.

Policy:

1. "Religious use of tobacco" means the use of tobacco products as part of a formal tradition, rite, or ritual. An example of this would be the use of tobacco products during a Native American religious ritual.
2. "Ceremonial use of tobacco" means the use of tobacco products for ceremonial purposes in connection with the practice of a traditional ceremony or ritual.
3. A subscriber may attest that an enrolled member does not use tobacco products if that enrollee’s only use within the past two months falls within the exception for religious or ceremonial use.