Title: Tobacco as it Relates to Religious or Ceremonial Use

Policy 91-2

Contact: Rules Specialist, ERB Division
Effective: January 1, 2018
Rescinded:

Associated RCW: 
Supersedes: N/A
Associated WAC: 182-12-300(3)
Owner: Rules & Policy Manager, ERB Division

Assoc. fed law/reg: 45 CFR 146.121(f)
Approved by: Acting ERB Director

Associated Procedures: ERB Division Director
Date approved: 12/1/2017

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 falls within the exception for religious or ceremonial use.