



**PRAIRIE MOUNTAIN HEALTH**  
**SANTÉ PRAIRIE MOUNTAIN**

**Brandon**

**Brandon Regional Health Centre**  
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Dear Friends in Faith,

Salaam, greetings, grace and peace to you.

I am delighted to be able to write in my capacity as Manager of the Spiritual Care Department of Prairie Mountain Health, outlining the many ways that the Islamic Centre here in Brandon has contributed to the religious care offered to Muslim patients at the Brandon Regional Health Centre. I can testify to the support offered by the members of the Brandon Islamic Centre to our patients, as well as education and support for the Spiritual Care Department. This relationship has been ongoing throughout my seven years in this role within Prairie Mountain Health.

The wider community of Brandon, and indeed South Western Manitoba, has grown significantly within the last 15 years. Part of that growth has been in the number of Muslim families living and working in Brandon and the wider District. This has presented both challenges and opportunities to those of us who work in the field of Spiritual Care. All of our current staff come to this work from a range of Christian traditions, and we are grateful to be able to partner with the Brandon Islamic Centre to provide our patients with the care they need, in terms of religious rituals and supports.

As a Spiritual Care Department, we have on several occasions called upon the membership of the Brandon Islamic Centre for the provision of appropriate and meaningful religious care to our Muslim patients, in accordance with Islamic teachings and practices. They bring to our facilities, both medical and psychiatric, the presence and prayers that our patients identify as being a source of strength and hope in a time of illness and injury. Their support goes beyond prayers and Pastoral visitation, as on occasion they have come in to provide respectful and religiously appropriate care for the body at time of death. Their presence at that time was a great comfort to a bereaved husband and grieving children. I know that our medical team were grateful for their assistance and guidance at that time, as well.

Having experienced the willingness of the Brandon Islamic Centre to provide this kind of support to Muslim patients in our facilities, I have also referred the Chaplains at the Brandon Correctional Centre to the supports offered by the Brandon Islamic Centre for the support of Islamic inmates there. On all occasions of need, the Brandon Islamic Centre has been willing to nurture the faith and strengthen the spiritual resources of these clients.

As vital as the visitation is, equally important is the role played by the Brandon Islamic Centre in offering education and promoting understanding. Our department has regularly sought out the membership of the Brandon Islamic Centre for teaching purposes, in order to develop our understanding and ability to provide appropriate support to our Islamic patients in hospital.

For example, a representative from the Brandon Islamic Centre came to teach the staff and students in our last Clinical Pastoral Education programme, which prepares people for work as Chaplains and Spiritual Care Providers within prisons, hospitals and care homes. This education better enables our Department to provide appropriate care and support to our patients.

The involvement of the Brandon Islamic Centre in this way has led to concrete measures being put in place here in our hospital. These include the use of the recitation of the Koran with patients in our facilities, and making prayer carpets available for the use of Islamic patients and staff within our facility. As we prepare to offer another unit of Clinical Pastoral Education here in the coming year, I anticipate that we will again be looking to the Brandon Islamic Centre for help in understanding the religious and spiritual needs of our Muslim patients.

The Brandon Islamic Centre's involvement in the wider community in Brandon is reflected in other ways, as well. I was honoured to be invited to attend Friday prayers (Salah) at Eid al' Ahah in 2014; and I am aware that the Brandon Islamic Centre has hosted a community feast and gathering at Knox United Church (my home congregation) as a way to build understanding between the Islamic community and the wider community in Brandon. This event was well-received, and helped to facilitate relationships between people of many faiths in our part of the world.

Seeking to provide appropriate and effective Spiritual Care in a multi-cultural, multi-faith setting such as the Brandon Regional Health Centre, our staff rely on the relationships that exist between our patients and their respective religious communities. We are regularly working with patients and families in times of crisis, and we know that the support of the appropriate religious community brings comfort and hope in times of illness and crisis. In this context, the presence and support of the Brandon Islamic Centre has proven to be most helpful.

Yours most sincerely,



Joe Ball,  
Manager, Spiritual Care Department  
Prairie Mountain Health