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Press Release: For Immediate Release

## Qalipu First Nation and Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services – Western Zone Announce New Indigenous Patient Navigator

October 26, 2023, Corner Brook—Qalipu First Nation, in partnership with Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) Health Services, is pleased to announce the introduction of a new position at Western Regional Memorial Hospital. The Indigenous Patient Navigator (IPN) will help First Nation, Inuit and Innu patients and their families navigate the healthcare system and ensure that their care is culturally safe, comfortable, and more streamlined while being admitted at the healthcare facilities in Corner Brook.

In addition to in-person support at Western Regional Memorial Hospital, support will also be available virtually, upon request and availability, to other healthcare facilities. In addition, the position will connect patients and their families with the resources and cultural support that they will need while strengthening their access to services upon hospital discharge.

Qalipu First Nation and NL Health Services continue to make provisions for Indigenous patients across all healthcare facilities so that everyone can be taken care of in a way that honours their path of health and well-being as Indigenous people, an important advancement of reconciliation.

*“We are proud of this partnership and the potential to enhance understanding and comfort among Indigenous peoples coming into the Western Memorial Regional Hospital for care. The addition of an Indigenous Patient Navigator situated on location at the hospital is a positive step forward in achieving our goals around health and wellness and we look forward to continued collaboration with NL Health Services”* said Chief Brendan Mitchell of Qalipu First Nation.

*“We are pleased to continue our partnership with Qalipu First Nation and to have an Indigenous Patient Navigator in place at Western Memorial Regional Hospital. We know that providing quality care is enhanced when patients are engaged in their care. Having a navigator in place will support Indigenous people to have their health needs met while respecting traditional values, beliefs and traditions,”* said Teara Freake, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, NL Health Services-Western Zone.



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Melissa Muise, a Mi'kmaw woman from St. George's who has worked with the Bands Health Department for a number of years, has accepted the position as the new Indigenous Patient Navigator. Melissa is very proud to be a part of a service which makes a huge difference in the lives of our First Nation, Inuit, and Innu patients and their families in Newfoundland and Labrador. She looks forward to connecting with patients and walking alongside them on their healthcare journey.

Contact Melissa at 1-709-640-9007 or (toll-free) 1-833-640-9007 or find more information on the Western Zone website: <https://westernhealth.nl.ca/indigenoushealth/>.

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