

Last Approved November 18, 2021 | Review every 3 years

Policy on the effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities

Office of Accountability:	Dean, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	MD Program, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry
Approver:	MD Curriculum & Program Committee (MDCPC)
Scope:	These procedures apply to instances where undergraduate students registered in the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program at the University of Alberta, irrespective of the geographically distributed site, to effectively address medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards.

Overview

This policy addresses standard 12.8 (Student Exposure Policies/procedures) of the Committee on Accreditation of Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS), which states:

Standard 12:8 A medical school has policies in place that effectively address medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards, including:

- a) education of medical students about methods of prevention
- b) procedures of care and treatment after exposure, including a definition of financial responsibility
- c) effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities.

This policy specifically is to address point c) effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities.

Oversight

The Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education is responsible for the oversight and implementation of the *Policy on the effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities.*

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities, with consideration of both the safety of the patient and the learning of the student.

POLICY

Proactive Disclosure

The MD Program, Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry, will inform students of the *Policy on the effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities* by posting it online under MD Program Policies and by discussing with students on an annual basis.

Policy

1. As registrants of the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA), MD undergraduate program students must comply with the CPSA Blood-borne Infections in Health Care Workers Advice to the Professions document (<https://cpsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CPSA-PHM-10-Blood-Borne-Infections-Policy.pdf>).
2. Medical students must be immunized and tested for viral illnesses as specified by the CPSA and the University of Alberta before applying for an educational license from the CPSA.
3. To comply with CPSA guidelines, students must be tested immediately after an exposure (see Blood or Body Fluid (BBF) Exposure).
4. The MD Program is not responsible for testing, reporting or monitoring students' BBP status.
5. Students who test positive for BBP above the SHEA standards of acceptable limits are required by the CPSA to report their status to the CPSA when they become aware of such status. Students are expected to report their status to the CPSA annually upon registration.
6. Students must confidentially report their BBP status (if viral loads rise about SHEA standards of acceptable limits) to the MD Program and the OAW (Office of Advocacy and Wellbeing) on admission or when they become aware of such status.
7. When a student discloses a blood borne pathogen that information is kept strictly confidential and only shared if directed by the CPSA. If the CPSA or the student inform Office of Advocacy and Wellbeing (OAW) of a significant status changes in a student's BBP levels, the OAW will work with the student, the CPSA, and the MD Program to either tailor specific clinical activities to avoid EPPs within a placement, to modify the student's rotation schedule, or, when appropriate, to arrange a medical leave of absence.

8. If a student tests positive for a BBP, ongoing monitoring is done by the student's health care practitioner.
9. Students with acceptably low viral loads below the SHEA standards of acceptable limits, as assessed on an individual basis by a CPSA Expert Panel, are not required to take any extraordinary precautions and may perform all activities, including EPPs.

DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use. [▲ Top]	
Defined Term:	
BBF Blood or Body Fluid Exposure	Blood or Body Fluid Exposure is the result of an event where a person is exposed to potentially infectious blood or bodily fluids through one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Percutaneous exposure through puncture of skin by needlestick or another sharp object ● Permucosal exposure through contact with mucous membranes ● Non-intact skin exposure through eczema, scratches, and damaged skin
BBP Blood Borne Pathogen	Blood Borne Pathogens are infectious microorganisms in human blood that can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
CACMS Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools	The Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) ensures that Canadian medical faculties' MD programs meet the quality expected when producing tomorrow's doctors. Medical schools demonstrating compliance are afforded accreditation, a necessary condition for a program's graduates to be licensed as physicians.
CPSA College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta	The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta
EPP	Exposure-Prone Procedures are invasive procedures where there is a higher than average risk that injury to the

Exposure-Prone Procedures	health-care worker may result in the exposure of the patient's open tissues to the blood or body fluid of the worker.
OAW Office of Advocacy & Wellbeing	The Office of Advocacy and Wellbeing(OAW) in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta looks after issues pertaining to the health and well-being of learners and faculty. The office also advocates on their behalf.
MD Program The Doctor of Medicine Program	The MD Program in the Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry at the University of Alberta oversees the four-year program leading to the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD).
PEP Post-exposure prophylaxis	Post-exposure prophylaxis is an emergency medical response given as soon as possible to reduce the risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens after potential exposure. It is available for HIV and hepatitis B.
SHEA Guidelines Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America Guidelines	SHEA Category III: Procedures for which there is definite risk of bloodborne virus transmission or that have been classified previously as "exposure-prone" (more information here)

Approval History

Approver	Status	Date
MD Curriculum & Program Committee	Approved	19 April 2018
Dr. Tracey Hillier, Associate Dean	Revisions: Updated Learner Advocacy and Wellness to Office of Advocacy and Wellness; removed LCME	12 June 2020
MD Curriculum & Program Committee	Approved	18 November 2021
Dr. Darryl Rolfson, Associate Dean	Added link to Shea Guidelines article in the definitions section	16 August 2023



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