

NHTI ALLIED DENTAL POLICY REGARDING INDIVIDUALS WITH BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The Allied Dental Education Department adheres to the recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Office of Health and Human Services of the State of New Hampshire. The Allied Dental Education Department shall provide a safe environment for clients, students, faculty, and staff while maintaining an ethical commitment to quality client care.

These policies have been developed to ensure the good health of all employees and students as well as those who visit the clinic and other campus facilities in a nondiscriminatory manner. The department recognizes the need for an ongoing, broad, education program that is reviewed regularly for accuracy and timeliness and presented periodically to keep all students, faculty, and staff updated.

Issues of Confidentiality

Local and state regulations regarding confidentiality and reporting of bloodborne pathogens test results should be observed. Special care shall be taken to preserve the dignity and confidentiality of the bloodborne pathogens infected student or college staff. The need to ensure appropriate confidentiality shall be balanced with the need to ensure appropriate precautions to prevent the spread of the disease.

There should be no routine requirement that students, employees, or clinic clients respond to questions about the existence of bloodborne pathogens, and no type of testing for the bloodborne pathogens antibody will be part of the admission process. It is appropriate to encourage new students or employees to inform campus health authorities if they have positive bloodborne pathogens test results.

Regular classroom attendance by bloodborne pathogens infected student/faculty in an unrestricted manner shall be allowed, as long as the bloodborne pathogen-positive individual is able to attend classes.

Bloodborne pathogens infected students and faculty engaged in clinical experiences should participate in special educational instruction and use guidelines prepared by the CDC.

In some instances, the college may need to decide concerning the health of the student/faculty on the advisability of the individual remaining in a clinical situation. This will be done on a case-by-case basis. It may be necessary to modify educational methods, employment responsibilities, and/or treatment protocols once an assessment of specific risks, confidentiality issues, and available resources is made.

Students with bloodborne pathogens will have access to student unions, cafeterias, recreational facilities, and other common areas.

The college will decide about residential housing of bloodborne pathogen-infected students on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind that the risk of the bloodborne pathogen-infected students exposed to contagious diseases may, in fact, be greater than the perceived risk of the student sharing a room with a bloodborne pathogen-infected person.

Without written consent from the bloodborne pathogen-infected individual, no medical information can be released to faculty, administrators, or parents. No information can be provided to groups, insurers, or employers. College health officials should know that all confidential medical information is protected by statutes and any unauthorized disclosure may create legal liability.

Disclosing an infected student or employee's condition should always be premised on a need-to-know basis and include a valid written authorization from the infected individual obtained before disclosure. Disciplinary action will be taken for breaches of procedure.

All information is confidential and protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1994 and the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

Treatment Precautions

It is important to understand that a person infected with bloodborne pathogens requires only blood and body fluid precautions.

In a clinical situation, OSHA universal precautions for bloodborne pathogens will be followed. All clients will be treated the same.

Special precautions to protect the health of bloodborne pathogen-infected persons should be considered during periods of prevalence of such contagious diseases as measles and chicken pox.

Bloodborne pathogen-infected persons should be excused from institutional requirements for certain vaccinations, notably measles and rubella vaccines.

Personnel Management

Personnel should not be excused on their own request from providing services to students and/or staff with bloodborne pathogens. There is no scientific or ethical reason to do so. If an employee refuses to perform his/her duties in this instance, the issue becomes a legal and administrative problem to be resolved on an individual basis. The college may seek legal counsel in such situations.

The interview process should be routine for both the college admissions process and perspective employees. The college should adhere to federal and state laws as well as College Equal Employment and Affirmative Action policies.

Admission/employment physical examinations should be required only if the requirement is routine for all admission/employment. The decision whether bloodborne pathogen-infected students or employees should be approved for admission/employment should always be made by a physician. Written medical examination records of bloodborne pathogen-infected persons should be maintained separate from student/personnel records and treated as confidential medical information.

Routine serological testing may be made available to students/personnel who wish to know their bloodborne pathogen infection status. If medical personnel advise that testing is necessary, a signed release should be obtained.

There is no increased risk to pregnant personnel from normal contact with bloodborne pathogen-infected persons. Follow CDC guidelines for infection control.