

Policy Regarding Individuals with Bloodborne Pathogens and Infectious Diseases

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 patients 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 pathogens-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 Center for Disease Control.
- In some instances, the college may need to make a decision concerning the health of the student/faculty and the advisability of the individual to remain working 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 make decisions about residential housing of bloodborne pathogens-infected students on a case-by-case basis, keeping in mind that the risk of the bloodborne pathogens-infected students exposed to contagious diseases may, in fact, be greater than the perceived risk of the student sharing a room with a bloodborne pathogens-infected person.
- Without written consent from the bloodborne pathogens-infected individual, no medical information can be released to faculty, administrators, or parents. No information can be provided to groups and/or insurers of employers. College health officials should know that all confidential medical information is protected by statutes and that 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 a valid written authorization from the infected individual must be 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 precaution.
- In a clinical situation, the OSHA universal precautions for bloodborne pathogens will be followed. All patients will be treated the same.
- Special precautions to protect the health of bloodborne pathogens-infected persons shall be considered during periods of prevalence of such contagious diseases as measles and chicken pox.
- Bloodborne pathogens-infected persons shall be excused from institutional requirements for certain vaccinations, notably measles and rubella vaccines.

Personnel Management

- Personnel shall 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 shall be routine for both the college admissions process and prospective employees. The college should adhere to federal and state laws as well as College Equal Employment and Affirmative Action Policies.
- Pre-admission employment physical examinations shall be required only if the requirement is routine for all admission/employment. The decision whether bloodborne pathogens-infected students or employees should be approved for admission/employment should always be made by a physician. Written medical examination records of bloodborne pathogens-infected persons shall 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 pathogens 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 pathogens-infected persons. Follow CDC Guidelines for Infection Control.

Policy for Dental Hygiene Students Regarding Bloodborne Pathogens and Infectious Diseases

NHTI's Dental Hygiene Program is committed to addressing issues related to bloodborne pathogens, such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Tuberculosis, and Human Immunodeficiency Virus to protect patients, students, faculty, and staff. This includes protecting the rights of individuals who may have a bloodborne infectious disease.

Students are required to treat all patients assigned and as a result may be exposed to bloodborne pathogens and infectious diseases while providing clinical services. Students are provided with instruction on infectious diseases, mechanisms of disease transmission, and infection control procedures to reduce the risk of disease transmission from patient to patient, patient to operator, and operator to patient. Students shall adhere to universal precautions and follow accepted OSHA and CDC guidelines while performing all clinical procedures on campus and at outside clinic affiliations.

Having provided students with this information to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and to protect themselves from contracting these diseases, the faculty and outside clinical supervisors assume no responsibility for the personal health of students. The ultimate responsibility for the prevention of self-contamination from infectious diseases rests solely with the individual students.

NHTI's Dental Hygiene Clinic is a safe place to provide and receive dental care. There is no significant risk of contracting bloodborne disease through the provision of dental treatment when appropriate infection control procedures are followed. Therefore, the purpose of this policy is to minimize the risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens and other environmental hazards in NHTI's Dental Hygiene Clinic.

Immunizations

Before working in clinic, students are advised to be vaccinated for Hepatitis B. If a student declines receiving the Hepatitis B vaccine, the student must sign the "Vaccination Declination Form," which states that the student takes responsibility for their own personal health. This form will be kept for any student declining the vaccination.

Standard Precautions

Standard precautions are an approach to infection control by routine and consistent use of appropriate barrier protection

such as gloves, lab coats, mask, and protective eyewear to prevent skin and mucous membrane transmission of microorganisms resulting from contact with blood or body fluids. Standard precautions shall be observed to prevent contact with potentially infectious materials. Under circumstances in which differentiation between body fluid types is difficult or impossible, all body fluids shall be considered potentially infectious materials.

Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

Students who are exposed to bloodborne pathogens in clinical course or outside rotation are expected to follow the procedures set forth in the NHTI Bloodborne Pathogen Exposure Control Plan located in the Dental Hygiene Program Manual.

Communication of Hazardous Material

Labels and signs shall be affixed to containers or regulated waste containing blood or other potentially infectious material. Labels required shall be fluorescent orange or orange-red with lettering or symbols in a contrasting color. Red bags or containers may be substituted for labels. Labels shall have the standard biohazard sign.

Enforcement of Policy

Students who engage in unsafe and/or careless clinical practices that create risk to the health of patients, students, and staff shall be subject to disciplinary action. This involves a faculty review of the student's action or behavior; the student may be suspended immediately from the program. Refer to the "Policy on Unsafe Dental Hygiene Practice" in the Dental Hygiene Program Manual.