

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION
SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

BLOOD BORNE VIRUSES

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PURPOSE

The Doctor of Medicine program (MD Program) at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (the School), Western University supports a safe learning environment in collaboration with the school's affiliated health care institutions. This policy outlines the process for managing risks related to blood-borne viruses in clinical training.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all applicants, medical students, and visiting medical students undertaking clinical learning within the Schulich Medicine program.

RELEVANT ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

12.8 STUDENT EXPOSURE POLICIES / PROCEDURES

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 for 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

All registered medical students (including visiting students) are informed of these policies before undertaking any educational activities that would place them at risk.

DEFINITIONS:

The following terms have the following meanings:

Affiliate: The healthcare institution where Learners are placed for clinical training as part of their educational experiences.

Applicant: An applicant to the MD Program.

Blood borne virus: A microbiologic agent capable of being transmitted to another person via contact with the blood of an infected individual. For the purpose of this policy this includes immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), and hepatitis C virus (HCV). [Blood Borne Infections | Public Health Ontario Blood Borne Infections | Public Health Ontario U31T](#)

COFM: Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine and related policies on [Immunization and Screening](#) and [Blood Borne Viruses](#).

Expert Panel: A panel consisting of faculty who have expert knowledge in the field of blood borne viruses and who fulfill the functions outlined in this policy.

Exposure-prone procedures (EPP): Invasive procedures where there is the potential for direct transmission of virus between the learner through an accidental needle stick injury (usually a hand, finger or thumb) of the learner via a sharp instrument, needle tip, or sharp tissue (spicules of bone or teeth) while delivering patient care in body cavities, wounds, or in poorly visualized, confined anatomical sites during surgical or assessment procedures.

Learners: for the purpose of this policy 'learners' refers to medical students and visiting medical students undertaking clinical learning within the Schulich Medicine program.

LEO: Learner Experience Office of the School.

Non-exposure prone procedures (NEPP): The procedures where the hands and fingers of the learner are visible and outside of the body always and there is no active bleeding by the patient and/or procedures/examinations that do not involve risk of possible injury to the learners' hands by sharp instruments and/or tissues. This is with the overall proviso that routine universal infection prevention and control procedures are adhered to always.

Examples of such NEPP include:

- the drawing of blood
- setting up and maintaining intravenous lines or central line if there has been no skin tunneling and the procedure is performed in a non-exposure prone manner
- minor suturing on the surface of the body
- the incision of external abscesses or similar lesions
- routine oral, vaginal or rectal examinations

Routine Practices and Additional Preconditions: The Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee's Document as well as Best Practices in Infection and Control as amended and updated

from time to time:

[Best Practices in IPAC | Public Health Ontario](#)

[Routine Practices and Additional Precautions | Public Health Ontario](#)

APPLICANTS' OBLIGATIONS

Applicants once accepted to Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry will be required to:

- Participate in the care of patients with various communicable diseases or infections including blood borne diseases;
- Comply with the MD Program Immunization statement, COFM's Immunization and Screening and Blood Borne Virus policies and this policy; and
- Inform LEO if they are positive for a blood borne virus. The UME Dean and/or LEO may consult with the Expert Panel or other experts as appropriate. Confidentiality of the applicant's state of health will be maintained to the greatest extent possible.

LEARNERS' OBLIGATIONS

Learners must:

- Know their serological status with respect to blood borne viruses;
- Be in a state of health such that they may participate in the academic programs, including patient care, without posing a risk to themselves, or others, including patients;
- Comply with this policy; the MD Program's Immunization policy and the COFM policies linked above.
- Comply with the Provincial Communicable Diseases Surveillance Protocol and Blood-Borne Diseases Surveillance Protocol for Ontario Hospitals developed under the Public Hospitals Act, Regulation 965;
- Use routine practices and additional precautions to prevent the spread of blood borne infections and other infections;
- Declare to LEO prior to enrollment in the MD Program curriculum and before the start of year 3 Clerkship course their personal antibody status for Hepatitis C and HIV by posted deadlines;
- Declare to LEO their Hepatitis B surface antigen and core antibody status if Hepatitis B surface antibody negative; and
- Prior to participation in any clinical learning experience be Hepatitis B immune if known to be Hepatitis B surface antigen negative. If a Learner is persistently antigen negative despite recurrent vaccine(s), the matter will be reviewed by an Expert Panel.

LEARNERS INFECTED WITH A BLOOD BORNE DISEASE OBLIGATIONS:

Learners infected with a blood borne disease have the following obligations:

- Inform LEO within 72 hours if they are positive or test positive for a transmissible blood borne illness. If a positive antibody was detected, the learner must declare the most recent

- respective Hepatitis C or HIV viral load to LEO;
- Meet with LEO within the week to determine whether a leave of absence and/or an accommodated learning plan is required;
 - Only pursue their studies if their continued involvement does not pose a health or safety hazard to themselves or others, including patients;
 - Have their condition reviewed and monitored by an Expert Panel at the request of the Assistant Dean, LEO.
 - Submit documentation to the Expert Panel as reasonably required for it to understand the health status of the Learner and to develop an accommodated learning plan.
 - Comply with an accommodated learning plan, as developed by an Expert Panel and approved by the UME Dean.
 - The Assistant Dean, LEO, will annually review all Learners with a positive test for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or HIV.
 - Submit documentation to LEO of ongoing adherence to treatment annually, in cases of Learners with HIV, Hepatitis B or C and a viral load who are on chronic antiretroviral therapy.
 - Disclose to their supervisor immediately if they accidentally expose a patient to a blood borne virus in a clinical setting.
 - Failure to comply with the Blood Borne Virus policy is a breach of professionalism and a patient safety risk and may result in dismissal from the program.

LEARNERS AT HIGH RISK

Learners with certain medical conditions that place them at a higher risk of complications if they are exposed to a blood borne virus may:

- Inform LEO of their medical condition;
- Submit documentation to the Expert Panel as reasonably required for it to understand the health status of the Learner and to develop an accommodated learning plan if appropriate;
- Comply with an accommodated learning plan, as developed by an Expert Panel and approved by the UME Dean;
- Learners who seek accommodation under this section because of their vaccination status must take immediate steps to come into compliance with Schulich Medicine & Dentistry UME policies regarding vaccinations.

LEARNERS WHO ARE POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO A BLOOD BORNE ILLNESS

Learners who are potentially exposed to a blood borne illness have the following obligations:

- Seek medical attention as soon as possible after the event;
- Report and document the occurrence to LEO as soon as possible; and
- Follow post-occurrence testing and treatment as required by the Expert Panel and Assistant Dean LEO.

Procedures To Be Followed In The Event Of Workplace Injury:

[London](#)

[Windsor](#)

SCHOOL'S OBLIGATIONS

The School will:

- Maintain confidentiality to the greatest extent possible regarding any information disclosed by applicants and learners concerning their serological status and disclose relevant information only with the appropriate consent.
- Ensure there is a timely response to and from all parties involved
- Provide education and training to all learners in the appropriate methods to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases, including blood borne diseases, for EPP and NEPP that are consistent with Routine Practices and Additional Precautions.
- Require all undergraduate learners who are Hepatitis B Antibody and Antigen negative and Hepatitis C and HIV serology negative to undertake and report repeat serology testing to LEO prior to entering any clinical learning.

- Create an accommodated learning plan for a learner who tests positive for a blood borne virus that respects and maintains the privacy of the learner but supports patient safety. This accommodated learning plan will be generated collaboratively involving input from the learner, the School, and the Expert Panel.
- Provide the accommodated learning plan to the learner's supervisors and clinical instructors and ensure the supervisors and clinical instructors understand the plan and how it should be implemented.
- Provide, in collaboration with the Affiliate, support for clinical instructors and supervisors in meeting a learner's accommodated learning plan for EPP.
- Provide education and training to a learner who tests positive for a blood-borne virus on appropriate methods to prevent transmission of blood borne diseases to patients and others

- Monitor Learner compliance with the accommodated learning plan for EPP
- Report to the Affiliate any issues arising that suggest non-compliance with the accommodated plan and any proposed investigation and necessary action.
- Form an Expert Panel created with faculty who have expert knowledge in the field of blood borne viruses and review such membership periodically.
- Advise the Learner's supervising supervisors of the EPP accommodations required for the Learner.
- Report to the Affiliate any issues arising that suggest non-compliance with the accommodated plan and any proposed investigation and necessary action.
- Form an Expert Panel created with faculty who have expert knowledge in the field of blood borne viruses and review such membership periodically.

EXPERT PANEL

The Expert Panel will:

- Meet for the sole purpose of advising LEO and the UME Dean on Learner accommodations necessary for individual clinical curriculum when a learner is found to be antigen positive for a relevant viral pathogen.
- Be convened at the request of the UME Dean and/or LEO.
- Include individuals who have expertise in the identified learner's curriculum; Infection Prevention and Control; Infectious Diseases; Hematology and/or Hepatology (with expertise in viral hepatitis and/or HIV infection); Public Health; Bioethics; Occupational Medicine; Hospital administration; and/or legal expertise.
- Allow a learner under review to make submissions to the Expert Panel and to appear before the Expert Panel prior to the panel making its recommendation to the UME Dean and LEO.
- Review, adjudicate and make recommendations on matters referred to it.
- Develop and advise on an accommodated learning plan for a Learner with a blood borne infection and recommend same to the learner and the UME Dean and LEO.
- Communicate the personal health information of a learner to School leaders and faculty on a need-to-know basis.

UME DEAN

The UME Dean will make the final decision on the appropriate accommodated learning plan for a particular learner following receipt of recommendations from the Expert Panel. The Learner shall be afforded the opportunity to meet with the UME Dean and to submit documentation for consideration within the deadlines set by the UME Dean. In making such a decision, the UME Dean may consult a third-party expert to review and deliver an opinion on the accommodated learning plan developed by the Expert Panel. Such an opinion may be used by the UME Dean in altering or upholding the plan recommended by the Expert Panel.