

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 statement outlines the process for managing risks related to blood borne viruses in clinical training.

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

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. Most notably, in Canada, this includes the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B virus (HBV), and hepatitis C virus (HCV).

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Diseases-and-Conditions/Infectious-Diseases/Blood-Borne-Infections>

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 that fulfills 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.

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 lines
- 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:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Health-Topics/Infection-Prevention-Control/Best-Practices-IPAC>

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/Health-Topics/Infection-Prevention-Control/Routine-Practices-Additional-Precautions>

APPLICANTS' OBLIGATIONS

Applicants once accepted will be:

- Required to participate in the care of patients with various communicable diseases or infections including blood borne diseases;
- Required to comply with the MD Program Immunization statement, COFM's Immunization and Screening and Blood Borne Virus policies and this policy; and
- Ethically responsible, upon acceptance, inform LEO if they are positive for a blood borne virus. The Vice 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, Blood-Borne Diseases Surveillance Protocol for Ontario Hospitals, developed under the Public Hospitals Act, Regulation 965;
- Use Routine Practices and Additional Precautions in order to prevent the spread of blood borne infections and other infections;
- Declare by posted deadlines 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;
- If Hepatitis B surface antibody negative, declare to LEO their Hepatitis B surface antigen and core antibody status; 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, the matter will be reviewed by an Expert Panel.

LEARNERS INFECTED WITH A BLOOD BORNE DISEASE

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

- Inform the LEO within 72 hours if they are or test positive for a transmissible blood borne illness. If a positive antibody was detected, 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 Vice Dean, UME.
- 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 their blood borne disease in a clinical setting.
 - Failure to comply with the above obligations may result in dismissal from the program for patient safety reasons.

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 Vice Dean, UME;
- 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 the 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 students 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.
- Ensure there is communication from LEO to the Vice Dean on Learners requiring accommodated learning plans for blood borne pathogens.
- Provide education and training to all Learners in 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 the LE Office 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 education and training to a Learner who tests positive for carriage of a blood-borne virus on appropriate methods to prevent transmission of blood borne diseases to patients and others.
- Provide the accommodated learning plan to the Learner's supervisor and educate the supervisor so that they understand the plan and how it should be implemented.
- Provide, in collaboration with the Affiliate, all support for clinical instructors in meeting a Learner's accommodated learning plan for EPP.
- Monitor Learner compliance with the accommodated learning plan for EPP.
- Advise the Learner's supervising physicians 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 the LE Office and the Vice Dean, UME on Learner accommodations necessary for individual clinical curriculum when a Learner is found to be antigen positive for a viral pathogen listed in Schedule "A" to this policy.
- Be convened at the request of the Vice Dean, UME 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 such submissions to the Expert Panel and to appear before the Expert Panel prior to the panel making its recommendation to the Vice Dean.
- 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 disease and recommend same to the Learner and the Vice Dean.
- Communicate the personal health information of a Learner to School leaders and faculty on a need-to-know basis.

VICE DEAN, UME

The Vice Dean will make the 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 Vice Dean and to submit documentation for consideration within the deadlines set by the Vice Dean. In making such a decision, the Vice 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 Vice Dean in altering or upholding the plan recommended by the Expert Panel.

SCHEDULE A

Hepatitis B
Hepatitis C
HIV