NUMBER: STAF 1.03

SECTION: Student Affairs and Academic Support

SUBJECT: HIV/AIDS/Testing Policy

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Policy for: Columbia Campus
Procedure for: Columbia Campus
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Issued by: Student Health Services

I. Policy

The University of South Carolina recognizes HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) as a national health concern that affects all segments of society. This policy provides guidelines to ensure that individuals identified as having a positive antibody to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) or Acquired Immune Deficiency syndrome (AIDS) will be protected from discrimination at the University of South Carolina, to protect the university community from unnecessary risks, and to protect the confidentiality of medical information within the guidelines established by state and federal law.

Guidelines concerning the handling of confidential medical information about students with a positive HIV antibody test or an AIDS diagnosis follow the general standards included in the American College Health Association's Recommend Standards and Practices for a College Health Program, the Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA), and the Thomson Student Health Center medical records policies.

The Office of Disability Services is available to provide additional assistance and services for students, under provisions of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Section 504 and ADA coordinator for students on the Columbia campus will coordinate academic assistance and services. Students should call the Educational Support Services Center at 777-6742.

For purposes of this policy, the term HIV/AIDS will be used throughout to refer to HIV-related illnesses, including a positive antibody test for HIV.

II. Procedure

All current information indicates that HIV/AIDS is not easily transmitted. There is no evidence of a health risk to others from casual contact with HIV-related illnesses. According to the Public

Health Service, no risk is created by living in the same residence as someone infected with HIV/AIDS; eating food handled by someone infected with HIV/AIDS; or swimming in a pool with someone infected with HIV/AIDS. The following guidelines and procedures are predicated on this understanding.

The response to the occurrence of a case of HIV/AIDS in the university community will be based on both the guidelines and the particular circumstances. Every effort will be made to protect the rights and confidentiality as well as to provide for the health of both the individual infected and other members of the university community.

A. Students, faculty, and staff will not be required to undergo screening for HIV/AIDS, except for voluntary blood procurement. Testing and counseling of HIV/AIDS is available upon request.

B. Neither the existence of HIV/AIDS nor a positive antibody test for HIV/AIDS will be a sole factor in admission or employment decisions

C. Students, faculty, staff with HIV/AIDS will be allowed regular classroom attendance in an unrestricted manner as long as they are physically and mentally able to attend classes.

D. Students who are aware that they have HIV/AIDS are encouraged to report their condition to the Student Health Center. This will permit proper monitoring, referral, treatment and supportive services. Furthermore, it will ensure that the affected individuals do not receive immunizations, required or elective, which could have serious consequences for those with poorly functioning immune systems. Thus, individuals with HIV/AIDS may be excused from institutional requirements for certain immunizations.

E. There is no medical justification for restricting the access of students HIV/AIDS to University housing, unions, facilities, restaurants, cafeterias, snack bars, gymnasiums, swimming pools, recreational facilities, or other common areas.

F. Decisions about residential housing options for students with HIV/AIDS must be determined on a case by case basis. Current medical information does not support the existence of an increased risk to those sharing dormitories. However, there may be reasonable health concerns for the health of those with HIV/AIDS exposed to certain contagious diseases (chicken pox, tuberculosis) in close living quarters. Health officers may wish to recommend private rooms to protect the health and well being of students. The standard additional rate for private rooms will be assessed.

G. In the programming of HIV/AIDS health education, emphasis should be placed on the following:

    1. Even though individuals may not have symptoms, persons with HIV/AIDS may transmit the virus to others through intimate, unprotected sexual contact or exposure to blood.

2. Among people who choose to be sexually active, the consistent and conscientious use of condoms greatly reduces the chance of transmission of the HIV/AIDS virus. Abstinence is the only certain preventative behavior.

3. The sharing of needles used in the injection of illicit drugs is an efficient way to transmit HIV/AIDS. It is also possible that needles used to inject steroids may transmit HIV/AIDS as well.

4. Persons with documented HIV/AIDS, and those with behavior risk factors for HIV/AIDS, should not donate blood, plasma, sperm, organs, or tissues.

5. People with HIV/AIDS pose no risk of transmitting the virus to others through ordinary, casual interpersonal contact.

6. It is possible that certain interventions and therapies may help limit the consequences of HIV/AIDS among people already infected. People who know they have been infected may thus benefit from regular medical follow-up and immunologic evaluation.

7. Sharing of toothbrushes, razors, and other personal items that may become contaminated with blood can transmit the virus.

8. University health care providers and other persons at risk of contact with blood and body fluids (housekeepers, athletic trainers, etc.) should use universal precautions when dealing with human bodily fluids. In compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), contaminated surfaces with bodily fluids should be cleaned with one (1) part freshly diluted household bleach to ten (10) parts water.

H. The university will strictly observe public health reporting requirements for HIV/AIDS positive students. Students who meet criteria for the definition of HIV must be reported to the state and local public health authorities. The detailed surveillance definition is included in: Centers for Disease Control: Revisions of Case Definition of AIDS for National Reporting -- United States: Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports -- update periodically.

Questions should be directed to Thomson Student Health Center general medicine clinic, 803-777-3175.

III. Reason for Revision

Policy updated to follow current practice and state law.