Policy Title
Exposure to Blood Borne Pathogens

Identifier
USCSOMG – STAF – 7.3

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LCME Standards
12.8 – Student Exposure Policies/Procedures

Scope
University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students

Policy Statement
It is the policy of USC School of Medicine Greenville to maintain a safe healthcare environment for patients, students and staff. Students caring for patients experience risk of exposure to several infectious diseases, including Hepatitis-B (Hep B), Hepatitis-C (Hep C) and Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). USC School of Medicine Greenville and Greenville Health System (GHS) shall implement measures to prevent transmission of infectious diseases, which may at times warrant exclusion of students from certain patient care settings or types of patient contact.

USC School of Medicine Greenville and GHS do not discriminate against otherwise qualified students based upon disabilities, including students infected with HIV, Hepatitis C or Hepatitis B virus, as long as the individual is able to perform the essential functions of the job safely and effectively with reasonable accommodations.

Reason for Policy
The purpose of this policy is for the safety and well-being of patients, students and staff. The policy outlines required actions expected of all students involved in patient care in order to minimize the risk of transmission of infections to themselves and others and to prevent or minimize clinical disease in the event they experience significant exposure.

Procedures
All USC School of Medicine Greenville students must follow the requirements and procedures as outlined in the GHS Policy: S-106-07 Work Policy Relating to Blood-borne Infectious Diseases.

In addition, students must follow Standard Precautions as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to prevent fluid borne infections in health care workers:
https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/bbp/default.html.
The following actions are specifically required of students to minimize risk of transmission of infection:

- Gloves must be worn for all parts of a physical examination in which contact might be expected with the oral, genital or rectal mucosa of a patient.
- Gloves must be worn while examining any skin rash that might be infectious (e.g., syphilis, herpes simplex, etc.)
- Gloves must be worn during all procedures that involve risk of exposure to blood or body fluids, including venipuncture, arterial puncture and lumbar puncture.
- Gloves must be worn during any laboratory test on blood, serum or other blood product or body fluids.
- After performing a venipuncture, the needle (and syringe) must be deposited immediately in a disposal box (available in all patient and procedure rooms).
  - DO NOT recap or remove needles by hand. Care must be taken to avoid bringing the needle near the body of other persons while transferring it to the container.
  - To reduce the overall risk of a needle stick, OSHA requires the use of syringes and other “sharps” designed with safety features that permit safe recapping/closure using one handed techniques. Students must use these safety devices while on clinical rotations and must first receive training from nurses or physicians experienced with using the particular type of device prior to using it themselves.
- Protective eye wear (such as goggles or a face shield) must be worn when participating in surgical procedures or other activities in which exposure to airborne blood or body fluids (via aerosolization or splashes) may occur.

Actions to Take Following Exposure to Blood or Body Fluids:

Despite the best efforts to prevent blood/body fluid exposure, such exposures occasionally occur. Exposure to blood-borne pathogens may occur through direct contact with a patient's blood or body fluid via a needle or through contact with non-intact skin or the mucous membranes. If an exposure is suspected, the following steps must immediately be taken:

1. The site of the contamination must be thoroughly irrigated and washed with soap and water for 5 minutes. Exposed eyes should be flushed with water, normal saline or appropriate eye wash for 10 minutes.
2. Notify the attending physician and supervising resident immediately.
   - Blood tests for HIV, Hepatitis C and Hepatitis B infection will be ordered by the resident or attending physician from the “source patient.”
   - It is imperative to ensure that these tests are ordered promptly.
3. The patient’s record should be promptly reviewed to determine if there is any evidence of a blood-borne infection (e.g. HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C)
4. Contact the GHS Exposure Control Office (864-455-4209). Do not leave a voice message regarding exposures. Instead, page the Exposure Control Nurse, 864-345-6133. After hours exposures must be reported to Infection Prevention & Control pager number 864-345-6133 (the area code must be dialed to page the Infection Preventionist).
5. Complete an eSREO located on GHS Plexus – type eSREO in the search box – select eSREO and complete the yellow highlighted fields. List the Physician Director of Employee Health as your supervisor. When completed select Submit.
6. Subsequent actions are dependent upon the exposure risk.
   - When indicated, counseling and prophylactic treatment in accordance with CDC recommendations to prevent HIV infection should occur as soon as possible following exposure.
   - Following exposure to other blood-borne pathogens the student will receive treatment and follow-up in accordance with CDC recommendations.

Confidentiality:

It is the intent of USC School of Medicine Greenville and GHS to treat all student information and records relating to infectious and contagious diseases with strict confidentiality. GHS Employee Health & Wellness
records are private and HIPAA-protected, and shall be released without consent only to individuals who have an absolute “need to know” as determined by the Medical Director of Employee Health, the Hospital Epidemiologist, or the Vice President of Human Resources.

**Sanctions**
Failure or refusal to cooperate with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

**Additional Contacts**
Office of Student Affairs  
GHS Employee Health & Wellness  
GHS Infection Prevention & Control

**Related Information**
USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook  
GHS Infection Prevention & Control Manual  
Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA)

**History**
- Date of Change: 05/07/2018
- Change: Move to standardized template
- Reason for Change: LCME CQI