

UNE Protocol for Health Professions Students Infected with Blood-Borne Pathogens

May 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this protocol is to promote patient safety and to provide risk management and guidance to an applicant (otherwise eligible for acceptance) or an existing student in a University of New England (UNE) health professions program who presents with an infection with a blood-borne pathogen (BBP), such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B (HBV) or hepatitis C (HCV). Health professions students are those who are students in UNE programs with a clinical training component, such as is found in the College of Dental Medicine, College of Osteopathic Medicine, College of Pharmacy, and Westbrook College of Health Professions.

Background

The University of New England (UNE) is committed to protecting the health of the public as well as the legal rights and privacy of students infected with blood-borne pathogens, and to non-discrimination.

Health professions students infected with a blood-borne pathogen (BBP), including but not limited to hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), may attend UNE and may complete their clinical education, subject to appropriate limitations as deemed necessary to ensure the safety of patients. This protocol and any limitations on a student's clinical activities are not intended in any way to preclude or discourage any applicant or student from pursuing the study or practice of medicine, surgery, dentistry or any health profession. Any restrictions and limitations imposed on the scope of an infected student's clinical training will be intended to protect patient health and safety while facilitating the student's education, all in a manner consistent with the best currently available scientific knowledge, standards of practice, and established recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC) and any other applicable guidelines regarding limitations needed to be applied to clinical activity, and the protocols and informed-recommendations established by the UNE Infectious Disease Committee (UNE ID Committee).

(See Appendix A, *Updated CDC Recommendations for the Management of Hepatitis B Virus-Infected Health Care Providers and Students*, July 2012, and *US CDC Guidance for Evaluating Health-Care Personnel for Hepatitis B Virus Protection and for Administering Postexposure Management*, December 2013)

BBP Immunization and Testing Requirements

All matriculated UNE health professions students will have their hepatitis B immunity status confirmed as part of the University's Immunization Compliance Policy and is aligned with US CDC Guidance. (See Appendix A, *UNE Immunization Compliance Policy*). Students who fail to show a response by serological means to hepatitis B

vaccination will be counseled to see a health care provider to determine if they are infected.

Although testing for HCV and HIV is not required for attendance in health professions programs at UNE, it is the professional responsibility of any student who has risk factors for these diseases and who may be encountering exposure-prone procedures to make arrangements for serologic testing. (See Appendix A, *US CDC HCV and HIV Testing Recommendations*)

Any student, who is aware that they are infected with a blood-borne pathogen, if not currently under the care of a health care provider, is strongly urged to contact Student Health Services so that appropriate medical treatment may be instituted and continued.

Any student who is known to be infected with a BBP and is matriculating in a health professions program that may include exposure-prone procedures, is required to report the infection status of the BBP to the UNE College Designee and the Director of Student Health, and then to be followed as per protocol. Each UNE college will designate an appropriate senior administrator or faculty member, usually an associate dean, to serve as the UNE College Designee.

More Specific Guidelines on Students Infected with Blood-Borne Pathogens

Notification. Students infected with a blood-borne pathogen must avoid circumstances in which they could potentially transmit their infection to others. Therefore, UNE health professions programs that involve clinical training with potential for exposure-prone procedures require any student who is infected with a blood-borne pathogen, such as HBV, HCV, or HIV, to notify the UNE College Designee and the Director of Student Health of his/her positive status so that the University may help to define any limitations necessary in clinical training settings, and make such accommodations as may be reasonable to permit the student's continued matriculation. Such notification is considered a professional responsibility of the student, and failure to disclose blood-borne pathogen infection status will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. This disclosure requirement applies to students matriculating in UNE's College of Osteopathic Medicine, College of Dental Medicine, and other program such as the Physician Assistant and Dental Hygiene programs in the Westbrook College of Health Professions, in which students may encounter exposure-prone procedures and/or for whom it is recommended by US CDC.

Clinical Training Limitations. The UNE College Designee and the UNE ID Committee will work together to evaluate and establish protocols, limitations, and restrictions on a case-by-case basis, utilizing the best currently available scientific knowledge and any established recommendations from the US CDC, Maine CDC/Maine DHHS, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), in Appendix A, and other applicable governmental and college health association guidelines regarding what, if any, limitations need to be applied to clinical activity. In conducting this evaluation and establishing of particular protocols and restrictions, the UNE College Designee and the

UNE ID Committee may consult with the student, the student's personal physician, and faculty at UNE, as determined appropriate, to assist in this individualized assessment and judgment.

Invasive procedures considered as potential risks for health care workers-to-patient transmission by the US CDC will be strictly avoided by students who are infected with HBV. Students with other known blood-borne pathogens will be advised on a case-by-case basis. In general, because of their lack of experience, students with HIV or HCV infections will be advised similarly to HBV-infected students. Recommended practices may include double gloving and not performing any procedures that have been previously identified as associated with a risk of provider-to-patient HBV transmission.

The student will be allowed to withdraw without penalty from any clinical setting that the student feels might present a risk for infectivity.

Confidentiality. The confidentiality of the student infected with a blood borne pathogen will be respected and maintained within the parameters of existing law and to the degree that is possible. For instance, the UNE ID Committee will review students' situations without knowledge of the students' names unless it is unavoidable and/or there is a need to know. However, in such cases, respect for the confidentiality of the student under review should be accorded as it is for any patient. Students should be allowed to complete the UNE health profession degree if at all possible with an effort by all to maintain confidentiality to the degree that it is possible.

Before a student infected with a BBP begins training in a particular clinical institution or site, the directors and supervisors of that site may be informed on a need-to-know-basis of the student's name, limitations imposed on the student's activities, and the type of BBP involved. Examples include clerkship directors in the departments of surgery, obstetrics/gynecology, emergency medicine, and any other departments that may involve exposure-prone procedures.

Accommodations. Reasonable efforts will be made to assist the student in completing the requirements for their UNE health professional degree. In addition, the student will be offered counseling concerning the options for the future selection of a career pathway in their UNE health profession. A student infected with HBV, HCV, or HIV may continue in the UNE health professions program he/she is matriculated in, as long as the student is able to carry out the physical and intellectual activities required of all students.

Counseling. Students will be counseled by the UNE College Designee concerning their potential risk to patients and their risk to themselves. They will be instructed to be punctilious in the use of standard (including universal) infection control precautions, the use of safer devices, and the implementation up-to-date hospital infection control techniques to prevent injuries that confer risks for transmission of BBP to patients and their providers. They will be referred to appropriate physician caregivers for optimal follow-up and therapy. The student will also have available counseling about future career plans based on the student's condition, current medical and legal practices and requirements.

HIV. HIV-positive students should undergo screening for associated infections such as tuberculosis, vaccinations such as for pneumococcus and influenza, and other appropriate preventive care, as is recommended by authorities such as the U.S. CDC and as determined by UNE's ID Committee.

Annual Review. The student's condition will be re-evaluated at least annually by the UNE College Designee and the UNE ID Committee to determine if any additional limitations are indicated. In the case of an HIV infection, test results such as the student's viral load and CD4 count, as well as his/her clinical status and the regimen of anti-retroviral therapy that is being employed can be useful in assisting in any decision making by UNE if the student will allow the UNE College Designee to discuss the results with his/her health care provider.

APPENDIX A

Updated CDC Recommendations for the Management of Hepatitis B Virus-Infected Health Care Providers and Students, July 2012

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6103a1.htm?s_cid=rr6103a1_w

US CDC Guidance for Evaluating Health-Care Personnel for Hepatitis B Virus Protection and for Administering Postexposure Management, December 2013

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr6210.pdf>

UNE Immunization Compliance Policy as of 6/24/14:

http://www.une.edu/sites/default/files/Immunization%20Compliance%20Policy_0.pdf

US CDC Testing Recommendations for Hepatitis C Virus Infection

<http://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/HCV/GuidelinesC.htm>

US CDC HIV Screening and Testing Recommendations

<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/guidelines/testing.html>

Maine CDC Guidelines To Prevent Transmission of HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C Through Medical/Dental Procedures

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/documents/guidelines-hcw-bbp.pdf>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

<https://www.osha.gov/>

APPENDIX B

Sample BBP Policies from Other Universities:

Emory University

Part V of the Student Handbook, Student Resources, Infection Control Protocols
Students Infected with HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and More Specific Guidelines on
Students Infected with Blood-Borne Pathogens

<http://med.emory.edu/handbook/index.html#6>

U of Massachusetts Medicine School

Policy Regarding Medical Students with Blood Borne Pathogen Infection

<http://www.umassmed.edu/som/admissions/Application-Process/Blood-Borne-Pathogens-Policy/>

University of Minnesota

Policy for Prevention of and Response to Educational Exposures to Blood Borne
Pathogens and Tuberculosis

https://www.meded.umn.edu/policies/du/Blood_Bourne_Pathogens_DU.pdf

University of Washington

[Bloodborne Pathogen Policy](#)

<https://depts.washington.edu/fammed/system/files/BloodbornePathPolicy.pdf>