

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.

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

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