

TITLE OF POLICY

UNC-CH MHSPAS Student Exposure Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the policy and procedures to address University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Master of Health Sciences Physician Assistant Studies (UNC-CH MHSPAS) student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards and to describe the mechanisms and resources for determining the effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

The UNC-CH MHSPAS Health and Safety Coordinator and UNC Chapel Hill Exposure Committee will review the policy on and as-needed basis and the UNC CH MHSPAS Faculty Committee will approve it.

ARC PA REFERENCES

A3.07: The program must define, publish, and make readily available and consistently apply: (a) a policy on immunizations and health screening of students. Such policies must be based on then current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for health professionals and state specific mandates.

A3.08: The program must define, publish, make readily available and consistently apply policies addressing student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards before student undertake any educational activities which would place them at risk. Those policies must: (a) address methods of prevention; (b) address procedures for care and treatment after exposure; (c) clearly define financial responsibility.

HISTORY OF APPROVAL AND UPDATES

Approved by the UNC-CH MHSPAS Faculty Committee on April 3, 2020. Updated November 2021; May 2022

DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, environmental diseases refer to noninfectious acute disorders associated with environmental exposures such as chemical or thermal burns or physical injuries such as falls

POLICY

A. Methods of Prevention

The UNC-CH MHSPAS Program carries out the following measures of prevention:

- **Immunizations:** To reduce the risk of UNC-CH MHSPAS students of being exposed to infectious diseases, all UNC-CH MHSPAS students are required to have immunizations as required by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), the [North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services](#), [North Carolina law](#), and [UNC Campus Health for Health Science Students](#). Immunization compliance is verified and monitored by CastleBranch online platform system and UNC-CH MHSPAS Health & Safety Coordinator. UNC-CH MHSPAS students receive email notifications regarding expiring immunizations.
- **Training:** UNC Health and the UNC-CH MHSPAS Program requires all UNC-CH MHSPAS students, to complete training in infection prevention, bloodborne pathogens, tuberculosis awareness, emergency preparedness, hazard communication and safety, active shooter safety, hostile patient procedures and fire safety prior to matriculation and the start of the clinical phase of the program. Training Compliance is verified and monitored by CastleBranch online platform system and UNC-CH MHSPAS Health and Safety Coordinator.

- **Annual Reminders and Publications of Procedures:** UNC-CH MHSPAS students receive annual learning made simple (LMS) modules through UNC Health on needlestick and blood borne pathogen AND bodily fluid exposure procedures. During pre-clinical phase and clinical phase orientation, UNC-CH MHSPAS Program provides instruction regarding methods of prevention, procedures for care and treatment and financial responsibility. Additionally, policies and procedures are readily accessible on the programs website and in the UNC-CH MHSPAS Student Handbook.
- **N95 Fit Testing Training:** UNC-CH MHSPAS students are also required to be fit tested for an N95 mask respirator during the Fall semester of the program. Students who are not in compliance with these requirements will be pulled from courses and/or activities that would place them at risk.

B. Procedures for Care and Treatment after Exposure

- If you had a possible exposure to blood borne pathogen, follow the steps below:
 - **Step 1: Clean the affected area**
 - For splashes to the nose, mouth or eyes, flush the area with water. Irrigate the eyes with clean water, saline, or sterile irrigants. If you are stuck with a sharp, clean the site with soap and water.
 - **Step 2: Immediately notify your supervisor.**
 - Examples include your clinical instructor, resident, attending, etc. to document the incident.
 - **Step 3: Obtain source patient information.**
 - Gather patient name, medical record number and location.
- **Procedures for Care and Treatment at UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill and Surrounding Clinical Sites:** UNC-CH MHSPAS students who are on supervised clinical practices experiences (SCPEs) at UNC Hospitals and at off-site clinical sites/off-site locations in the surrounding regions of Chapel Hill/Durham/Raleigh will be managed by [UNC-CH Campus Health System](#). Campus Health Service [(919) 966-6573] is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. When Campus Health Services is closed, the physician on call can be contacted through HealthLink (888-996-2767) a nurse advice service affiliated with UNC Healthcare. **UNC-CH MHSPAS students must also notify the UNC-CH MHSPAS Director of Clinical Education immediately via phone call and email of any exposure.**
- **Procedures for Care and Treatment at Off Sites Clinical Sites:** UNC-CH MHSPAS students who are on supervised clinical practice experience (SCPEs) at clinical sites away from the surrounding regions of Chapel Hill/Raleigh/Durham region will be managed per the occupational health system in place at that institution or clinical site. UNC-CH MHSPAS Students are provided instruction regarding the management of blood borne pathogen exposure and needlestick during their orientation to the clinical site by the clinical site education coordinator/clinical instructor. Students must also contact Campus Health Services [(919) 966-6573] which is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. When Campus Health Services is closed, the physician on call can be contacted through HealthLink (888-996-2767) a nurse advice service affiliated with UNC Healthcare. **UNC-CH MHSPAS students must also notify the UNC-CH MHSPAS Director of Clinical Education immediately via phone call and email of any exposure.**

In all cases, the UNC-CH MHSPAS must complete the [UNC-CH MHSPAS Student Incident Report](#) and the exposure must be reported to the [UNC Chapel Hill Campus Health System](#) for tracking purposes and when needed, to assist in the case.

The components of care and treatment after exposure can be subdivided into three major areas:

- Blood borne pathogen exposures,
- Other communicable disease exposures, and
- Conditions requiring special consideration like pregnancy or immunosuppressive conditions.
 - **Blood borne pathogen exposures:** Students who have tested positive for a bloodborne pathogen, such as HIV, HBV, or HCV, follow the policy outlined in “Environment, Health and Safety Manual – [Chapter 06.07: Clinical Safety - Healthcare Personnel Who Are Infected With Hepatitis B Virus, Hepatitis C Virus, and/or Human Immunodeficiency Virus](#). This policy describes the effect on the student’s learning activities of testing positive for HBV, HCV, or HIV.
 - **TB exposure:** All UNC-CH MHSPAS students are required upon matriculation to have either a 2-step tuberculin skin test (TST) or an interferon-gamma release assay (IGRA) blood test prior to matriculation. In addition, students are required to have either a TST or IGRA on an annual basis. Students who have tested positive for TB are evaluated at Campus Health, to determine whether the student has latent TB or active TB. Immunization compliance is verified and monitored by the CastleBranch online platform system and the UNC-CH MHSPAS Program. UNC-CH MHSPAS students receive email notifications regarding expiring immunizations.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR CARE AND TREATMENT FOR BLOOD BORNE EXPOSURE/NEEDLESTICK

- **UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill:**

The costs of the initial evaluation and management of a blood borne pathogen exposure/needlestick at the University of North Carolina Hospitals is the responsibility of the student. Expenses for baseline testing will be filed with the student’s private health insurance by Campus Health or Labcorp.

UNC-CH MHSPAS students should use the pharmacy benefit of their private health insurance plan to pay for medications.

For long-term management, UNC-CH MHSPAS students should use their private health insurance coverage.

The costs of the initial evaluation and management of a blood borne pathogen exposure/needlestick at the University of North Carolina Hospitals is covered by University of North Carolina Hospitals for the source patient. Campus Health Services will help coordinate source patient testing for you.

- **Off-Site Locations/Off-Site Clinical Sites:**

The costs of the initial evaluation and management of a blood borne pathogen/needlestick for off-site locations and/or Off-Site Clinical Sites is the responsibility of the student. Expenses for baseline testing will be filed with the student’s private health insurance by Campus Health or Labcorp.

UNC-CH MHSPAS students should use the pharmacy benefit of their private health insurance plan to pay for medications.

For long-term management, UNC-CH MHSPAS students should use their private health insurance coverage.

The costs of the initial evaluation and management of a blood borne pathogen exposure is typically covered by their respective occupational health offices for the source patient. In some circumstances, the source patient's insurance may pay for source patient testing.

Effects of Infectious and/or Environmental Disease or Disability on Educational Activities

- **Infectious Diseases:**
 - Blood borne pathogens: Students with HIV, hepatitis B, or other blood borne infections will be evaluated according to the [University of North Carolina Policy on HIV-Infected and HBV-Infected Employees and Students Who are Engaged in University Patient-Care Activities policy](#).
 - TB: Students with latent TB may participate in patient care activities without restriction but may wish to consult with a health care professional regarding treatment as studies have shown that treatment can reduce the incidence of disease progression. Students with active TB should be treated and placed in isolation and will not be allowed to participate in clinical activities until they are determined to no longer be infectious. The student may be referred to an infectious disease specialist, and if so, the physician will be required to comply with *Non-Involvement of Providers of Student Health Services in Student Assessment* if they are involved in physician assistant teaching and/or evaluation.
- **Environmental Disease:** Students with environmental diseases are evaluated at UNC-CH Campus Health to determine the impact, if any, on their learning activities. Depending on the nature of the student's environmental disease, they may wish to consult with a specialist, and if so, the physician will be required to comply with *Non-Involvement of Providers of Student Health Services in Student Assessment*, if the health care provider is involved in PA student teaching and/or evaluation. Required limitations in learning activities will be communicated to the Director of Clinical Education and every effort will be made to minimize disruption of the student's progress through the curriculum.
- **Disabilities:** Students with disabilities should contact the UNC CH Accessibility Resources & Service (ARS) Office regarding accommodations, if applicable. The UNC-CH MHSPAS Program will work with the UNC-CH MHSPAS student and the UNC-CH ARS to determine, the impact, if any, on the student's learning activities.

UNC-CH MHSPAS PROGRAM CURRICULAR PHASE PROCEDURES:

- **PRE-CLINICAL PHASE:**
 - Pre-clinical phase students are required to complete and submit the [UNC-CH MHSPAS Program Student Incident Report](#) located in the Policies and Procedures Section of the UNC PA Program website under the Health & Safety Section.
 - UNC-CH MHSPAS pre-clinical phase students must be evaluated by UNC-CH Campus Health System and cleared to return to class
 - Pre-clinical phase students with infectious and/or environmental diseases may request a university excused absence from [UNC-CH Campus Health System](#) for any required activity from the UNC-CH MHSPAS Program. The university excused absence allows the students to make up missed work without penalty.
 - If the UNC-CH MHSPAS student needs to miss a significant amount of time, the UNC-CH MHSPAS student may receive a temporary grade of Incomplete for the course and a plan is worked out with the course director, the student's faculty advisor, and/or the Director of Pre-Clinical Education

- **CLINICAL PHASE:**
 - UNC-CH MHSPAS clinical phase students are required to complete and submit the [UNC-CH MHSPAS Program Student Incident Report](#) located in the Policies and Procedures Section of the UNC-CH MHSPAS Program website under the Health & Safety Section and immediately notify the Director of Clinical Education via email and text.
 - UNC-CH MHSPAS clinical phase students must be cleared by [UNC-CH Campus Health System](#) prior to returning to supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs).
 - UNC-CH MHSPAS clinical phase students who are unsure as to whether their condition should excuse them from a clinical setting for patient safety reasons may be screened by [UNC-CH Campus Health System](#) according to the UNCH Infection Control Manual and they may be charged for this screening.
 - UNC-CH MHSPAS clinical phase students with infectious and/or environmental diseases may also request an excused university absence from Campus Health.
 - Generally, UNC-CH MHSPAS students who are afebrile may continue to work in clinical settings.
 - UNC-CH MHSPAS Students who are febrile will be given a university excused absence by UNC-CH Campus Health and may receive an “Incomplete” in the supervised clinical experience (SCPE) based on the amount days missed during the SCPE as determined by the UNC-CH MHSPAS Academic Excellence Committee (AEC). If the UNC-CH MHSPAS student is given an “Incomplete” the UNC-CH MHSPAS student will complete the SCPE at a later date as determined by the UNC-CH MHSPAS Academic Excellence Committee (AEC).

PROCEDURE(S)

<https://campushealth.unc.edu/urgent-needs/>

<https://ars.unc.edu/>

<https://policies.unc.edu/TDClient/2833/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=132570>

<https://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/unc-pa/wp-content/uploads/sites/482/2020/04/UNC-PAP-Student-Incident-Report.pdf>