

**TITLE OF POLICY**

Health, Safety, and Immunization Policy

**PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

To establish the requirements for immunizations, health insurance, and annual and periodic medical testing to ensure compliance in the clinical environment.

**RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE**

The Offices of Medical Student Education reviews the policy on an as-needed basis and Education Committee approves it.

**LCME REFERENCE(S)**

LCME 10.6: Content of Informational Materials

LCME 12.7: Immunization Requirements and Monitoring

**HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES**

Updated and approved by Education Committee February 2025

Approved by Education Committee February 2024

**POLICY**

Medical students enrolled at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine are required to meet immunization standards set by the State of North Carolina in addition to those set by the School of Medicine to ensure safety in the clinical environment. Noncompliance puts both patients, physicians, and fellow learners at risk for serious illness or transmission of disease. Students who are noncompliant according to the expectations below will not be permitted to attend class. Students with repeated missed deadlines may be referred to the Student Progress Committee.

Upon matriculation, students are required to upload immunization documentation required by the state into their ConnectCarolina portal. Information about specific immunization requirements can be found at <https://campushealth.unc.edu/services/immunizations/>.

Students can receive all vaccinations and tests by appointment at Campus Health. Seasonal flu and COVID-19 booster vaccines are frequently available at walk-in clinics across campus during the fall semester.

Health sciences students, including medical students, have additional health and safety requirements that promote student health and help to “minimize the potential for transmission of communicable diseases within our community” (Campus Health website). As such, all medical students must complete the additional requirements listed in the appendix to this policy.

**Additional health and safety requirements:**

All students will be required to complete an N95 mask fit test upon matriculation, typically offered during the week of Orientation. This test requires that a student be free of facial hair and that they have not consumed food or beverages (except water), smoked, chewed gum, or used mouthwash, lipstick, or lip



balm within 15 minutes of the test. Students who fail the first fit test may be offered a second opportunity to test. A student who does not attend the follow-up fit test will be required to complete and pass a fit test at their own expense.

Those who maintain a beard for religious reasons and who wish to file a request for a religious accommodation must do so at <https://eoc.unc.edu/accommodations/religion/> at least two weeks prior to the scheduled fit test.

Upon the completion of Foundation Phase, students entering Application Phase are required to complete a second background check (a first background check is required upon matriculation) as well as a urine drug screen. Each regional campus may have a different deadline for completion of these expectations; students must meet their campus deadline in a timely manner.

#### **UNINTERRUPTED COMPLIANCE:**

Medical students are required to maintain continuity in compliance with these requirements from matriculation through the date of graduation, except for those who are on personal, medical, or administrative leave from the medical school curriculum. **Students on academic leave and who are enrolled in a UNC-sponsored degree program are required to maintain compliance.**

#### **PROCEDURE(S):**

Upon matriculation, students will be given order codes to create a Health Portal and Background Check in the compliance platform. Students must create an identity and upload their documents (TB test in the last twelve months, DPT, Covid-19, Varicella, and current health insurance) by the first day of class in fall semester. Documentation of the complete Hepatitis B series including positive, quantitative titer must be uploaded by December 31 of the first year. The annual influenza vaccination is due by October 15 of each year. Students who matriculated after July 1 may request an exception to these deadlines by emailing [SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu](mailto:SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu) by the first day of class in the fall semester.

Emailed or faxed documents, or those not filed in the school's selected compliance platform, are not acceptable.

Students who do not have health insurance coverage until the first day of class and who are missing vaccinations should email [healthandsafety@med.unc.edu](mailto:healthandsafety@med.unc.edu) for instruction.

Students who do not meet the stated deadlines for Covid-19, Varicella, DPT, health insurance, tuberculosis test (first day of class for MS1s); Hepatitis B (December 31 of the first year); influenza (October 15 annually); health insurance renewal (January 31 annually); self-screening for tuberculosis (May 15 annually); drug screen, background check, and annual Technical Standards and workplace safety certification updates will be immediately withdrawn from class/clinic and placed on Administrative Leave until the completion of each requirement. **Administrative Leave must be noted in a student's Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE).**

When the student's documentation is approved in the compliance platform, the student may return to class/clinic on the next business day. Students with repeated missed deadlines may be referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) as described in the SPC policy.



**DEFINITION(S):**

**COMPLIANCE:** A student's immunization and test records are approved in the compliance platform by 5:00 PM of the stated deadline, up-to-date, and valid until the next renewal deadline in the student's record. The student has met the stated deadline(s) for updating their Technical Standards attestation and workplace safety certifications.

**APPENDIX:**

**HEPATITIS B:**

The Hepatitis B requirement includes both a primary Hepatitis B vaccination series and a positive, quantitative surface antibody titer (HBsAb; lab report required, which should include numerical value with a reference range). The positive (>10 mIU/mL) serological quantitative Hepatitis B surface antibody titer must be performed no earlier than four (4) weeks and no later than eight (8) weeks after the final vaccine of a series.

Two different primary series available:

1. Traditional three (3) vaccine series and titer (completed in ~6.5 months):

Vaccine #1: Birth or anytime

Vaccine #2: At least one (1) month after first vaccine

Vaccine #3: At least five (5) months after second vaccine

Quantitative antibody titer: At least four (4) weeks after final vaccine

2. Hepislab-B® vaccine series and titer (completed in ~2.5 months):

Vaccine #1: Birth or anytime

Vaccine #2: At least four (4) weeks after first vaccine

Quantitative antibody titer: At least four (4) weeks after final vaccine

Students who have completed both a childhood Hepatitis B series and an adult series and whose final titer is negative must be evaluated and counseled appropriately by a UNC Campus Health provider.

**VARICELLA:**

The Varicella vaccination requirement may be met in one of two ways:

1. Two (2) varicella vaccinations:

Vaccine #1: Birth (or anytime)

Vaccine #2: At least one month after first vaccine

No titer is required

2. Positive antibody titer (results documented by medical professional or lab report; qualitative is acceptable, for example: "Positive" or "Immunity")

Varicella/chicken pox titers can be qualitative. A notation of "positive" or "immunity" without a quantitative (numerical) value is acceptable. If you have had two varicella vaccinations, a titer is not required. History of disease is not acceptable as meeting the requirements. However, if you have had



varicella/chicken pox, discuss with your health care provider the option of receiving a titer instead of the vaccines.

**TETANUS, DIPHTHERIA, & PERTUSSIS (DPT):**

Students who have not received tetanus and diphtheria toxoids and acellular pertussis vaccine (Tdap) or for whom pertussis vaccination status is unknown are required to receive 1 dose of Tdap, followed by a tetanus and diphtheria toxoids (Td) booster every 10 years.

**COVID-19:**

Students are required to receive an initial series against Covid-19 with one of the Food and Drug Administration's three authorized/licensed vaccination products:

1. Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna
2. Novavax
3. J&J/Janssen (no longer available for use in the United States; vaccination must have been received before May 6, 2023)

While annual booster vaccines are not required, they have been demonstrated to significantly reduce the severity and duration of Covid-19 symptoms.

**TUBERCULOSIS TESTING:**

Matriculating students who have not previously tested positive for tuberculosis must provide documentation of one of the following two testing methods:

1. IGRA blood test (QuantiFERON Gold or T-Spot; lab report required) within the past twelve (12) months
2. Two- (2) step TB skin test: an initial TST, followed by repeat TST 1-3 weeks later if initial test is negative, within the past twelve (12) months

The two-step skin test (TST) requires four visits to a provider:

- TST #1 placed
- TST #1 read (no earlier than 48 hours and no later 72 hours after placement)
- TST #2 placed (no earlier than one week and no later than three weeks after the first read)
- TST #2 read (no earlier than 48 hours and no later 72 hours after placement)

Annually thereafter, students who have not previously tested positive for tuberculosis will submit a symptom self-screening form that does not require a visit to a healthcare provider. However, certain responses on this form may warrant that the student complete a new TST, IGRA, or other medical evaluation. This deadline shall be May 15 annually.

Upon matriculation, a student who has previously tested positive for tuberculosis (i.e., latent tuberculosis) must provide both:

1. Chest x-ray (CXR) performed after the initial positive TB test result. Chest x-ray report and positive TB screening test result are both required.



2. Completed school form (TB Symptom Questionnaire) including provider clearance within the past twelve (12) months. This clearance can be completed at Campus Health.

Students who have previously tested positive for TB will annually renew this requirement with an updated provider clearance form.

Students must be aware that clinics and hospital systems have varying requirements for tuberculosis testing, and that they may need to complete a new test before the start of Application Phase, any Individualization Phase block, or an “away” rotation. It is the student’s responsibility to be informed of the health and safety expectations for each clinical rotation in which they will be participating.

The Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine for tuberculosis, frequently administered in childhood in persons not born in the United States, is not an acceptable alternative to a TB test. Students who have received the BCG vaccine are strongly encouraged to complete the IGRA test rather than the skin test, as the BCG vaccination may cause a false-positive reaction.

#### **INFLUENZA:**

Documentation of an annual flu vaccine is required. Students are not required to complete this vaccination upon matriculation but must receive the seasonal vaccination in the fall of each year to meet the annual October 15 deadline.

#### **HEALTH INSURANCE:**

Upon matriculation, students must upload verification of health insurance for the current year. If a student will not have coverage until they are enrolled as a UNC student, they can upload their proof immediately following the start of classes.

While the UNC system has approved faith-based community health sharing programs as an acceptable alternative to the University's mandatory student health plan, UNC Health and other clinical partners do not accept health shares as valid health insurance. Students on such health share plans (e.g., Medi-Share, Christian Health Ministries, Shared Health Alliance) must purchase from a valid insurer. This can be done through StudentBlue at Campus Health, through the government health insurance marketplace, or through a private insurer.

Renewal will be set for January 31 of each year.