

## Faculty of Medicine

### Guidelines Regarding Infectious Diseases and Occupational Health for Applicants to and Learners of the Faculty of Medicine Academic Programs

Lead Writer: Expert Panel for Infection Control, Faculty of Medicine

Approved by: Faculty of Medicine, Faculty Council

Date of original adoption: March 3, 1997 (Faculty Council)

Date of revision: February 11, 2013

Date of next scheduled review: February 11, 2017

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#### 1. JURISDICTION:

This document applies to applicants to and all learners with patient contact<sup>i</sup> within the Faculty of Medicine in the following programs:

Undergraduate Medicine (MD program)  
Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy  
Physical Therapy  
Speech Language Pathology  
Physician Assistant  
Medical Radiation Sciences  
Postgraduate Medical Residents  
Postgraduate Clinical Fellows

Exceptions regarding applicability, procedures, or reporting for each type of learner, if any, will be noted below.

#### 2. INTRODUCTION:

This document is evidence-based, developed and reviewed by an expert panel<sup>ii</sup> on behalf of the Faculty of Medicine. The document closely complies with the current OHA/OMA Communicable Disease Surveillance Protocols<sup>iii</sup> on infectious disease and occupational health; however, students should follow practices as per their assigned training sites.

This document is distinct from the Faculty of Medicine programs' Immunization Requirements, which are based on the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM) Immunization Policy<sup>iv</sup>. The COFM policy complies with the current OHA/OMA Communicable Disease Surveillance Protocols, which include immunization recommendations, and learners must fulfill these requirements before beginning a clinical placement. Please refer to specific program or divisional offices (Undergraduate Medicine, Rehabilitation sector, etc.) for forms and form completion procedures/deadlines regarding submission of immunization data.

Applicants to and students of the MD program must ensure compliance with the Undergraduate Education: Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine (COFM) Blood Borne Pathogen Policy<sup>v</sup>, to which this document also adheres.

### **3. PURPOSE:**

This document is intended to minimize the risk and impact of **infectious diseases** that may pose a threat to learners and those with whom they may come into contact. It is intended to address education requirements on methods of prevention, outline procedures for care and treatment after exposure, and outline the effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on learning activities.

### **4. SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY:**

These Guidelines refer to a “**responsible party**” for all matters related to reporting of situations involving applicants and learners with infectious disease. The “responsible party” in each program of the Faculty of Medicine has been designated as follows:

The implementation of this document for applicants to and learners in the Undergraduate Medicine program is the responsibility of the Associate Dean, Health Professions Student Affairs.

The implementation of this document for applicants to and learners in Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, and Medical Radiation Sciences is the responsibility of the respective Departmental Chairs.

The implementation of this document for applicants to and learners in the Physician Assistant Program is the responsibility of the program’s Medical Director.

The implementation of this document for applicants to and learners in the graduate programs of the Faculty of Medicine is the responsibility of the Departmental Chairs in consultation with the Vice-Dean, Graduate Affairs.

The implementation of this document for Postgraduate Medical Residents and Postgraduate Clinical Fellows, and for applicants to these positions, is the responsibility of the Vice-Dean, Postgraduate Medical Education.

These individuals are responsible for informing the Faculty of Medicine Expert Panel on Infection Control of any known/diagnosed positive TB, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or HIV screening tests that are brought to their attention by learners in or applicants to their program(s).

### **5. DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION:**

Learners will be informed of this document through both oral and written notification upon admission and at the beginning of each academic/programmatic year. Applicants will be informed of this document through written admissions materials (online or in print).



## 6. GUIDELINES:

### 6.1. GUIDELINES for APPLICANTS TO ALL UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, AND POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE:

1. The Faculty of Medicine will inform potential applicants that, if they are admitted into the program to which they are applying:
  - a. they may be required to take part in the care of patients with various infectious diseases including Hepatitis, TB, and HIV/AIDS, during their studies;
  - b. they will be trained in methods of preventing spread of infection to themselves, to other patients and other health care providers (including Routine Practices and hand hygiene);
  - c. there is a risk that they may contract an infection during the course of their studies;
  - d. they have a responsibility to prevent the spread of infection to others;
  - e. they will be required to comply with the immunization requirements of the specific program to which they have applied within the Faculty of Medicine;
  - f. if they have or contract an infectious disease (see examples in Section 7), they will be permitted to pursue their studies only insofar as their continued involvement does not pose a health or safety hazard to themselves or to others;
  - g. they will be required to comply with the OMA/OHA Communicable Disease Surveillance Protocols that were developed in compliance with Regulation 965, Section 4, under the *Public Hospitals Act*. This regulation requires each hospital to have by-laws that establish and provide for the operation of a health surveillance program including a communicable disease surveillance program in respect of all persons carrying on activities in the hospital.
  - h. they may be required to give body fluid specimens if they are exposed to or contract certain diseases while working in health facilities.
2. The Faculty of Medicine requires successful applicants and learners to undergo TB and Hepatitis B testing, but does not require testing for Hepatitis C and HIV.
3. Applicants with known/diagnosed active tuberculosis (TB), Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or HIV infection are required, **upon acceptance**, to inform the responsible party (as outlined in Section 4) of their condition. The diagnosis of any infectious disease in an applicant or learner shall remain confidential within a strict “need to know” environment.



4. All applicants to Undergraduate Medical Education, Postgraduate Medical Education, graduate programs, Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology, Medical Radiation Sciences, or the Physician Assistant Professional Degree program with a known/diagnosed Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV or active tuberculosis infection will be reviewed by the University of Toronto Faculty of Medicine Expert Panel on Infection Control, which will provide the relevant Preclerkship or Clerkship Director, Academy Director, Program Director, Graduate Coordinator, Clinical Coordinator, Fieldwork Coordinator or Medical Director with recommendations regarding necessary curriculum/rotation adjustments.
5. As information on infectious diseases is a mandatory disclosure item on a learner's application to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO), the Faculty of Medicine may provide information and/or updates to the College regarding a learner's immunization/infectious disease status and any recommendation regarding the learner from the Expert Panel on Infection Control.

## **6.2. GUIDELINES for LEARNERS IN ALL UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, AND POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE:**

1. The Faculty of Medicine will inform enrolled learners that:
  - a. they may be required to take part in the care of patients with various infectious diseases including Hepatitis, TB, and HIV/AIDS, during their studies;
  - b. they will be trained in methods of preventing spread of infection to themselves, to other patients and other health care providers (including Routine Practices and hand hygiene);
  - c. there is a risk that they may contract an infection during the course of their studies;
  - d. they have a responsibility to prevent the spread of infection to others;
  - e. they are required to comply with the immunization requirements of their program in the Faculty of Medicine;
  - f. if they have or contract an infectious disease at any point prior to or during their program(see examples in Section 7), they will be permitted to pursue their studies only insofar as their continued involvement does not pose a health or safety hazard to themselves or to others;
  - g. they are required to comply with the OMA/OHA Communicable Disease Surveillance Protocols that were developed in compliance with Regulation 965, Section 4, under the *Public Hospitals Act*. This regulation requires each hospital to have by-laws that establish and provide for the operation of a health surveillance program including a communicable disease surveillance program in respect of all persons carrying on activities in the hospital.

- h. they may be required to give body fluid specimens if they are exposed to or contract certain diseases while working in health facilities.
2. The Faculty of Medicine requires learners to undergo tuberculosis (TB) and Hepatitis B testing, but does not require testing for Hepatitis C and HIV.
3. Learners with a known/diagnosed infection for any of active tuberculosis, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, or HIV are required to inform the responsible party (as outlined in 4) of their condition immediately. The diagnosis of any infectious disease in a learner shall remain confidential within a strict “need to know” environment.
4. All learners in Undergraduate Medical Education, Postgraduate Medical Education, graduate programs, Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, Medical Radiation Sciences, or the Physician Assistant Professional Degree program with a known/diagnosed Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV or active tuberculosis infection will be reviewed by the University of Toronto, Faculty of Medicine Expert Panel on Infection Control, which will provide the relevant Preclerkship or Clerkship Coordinator, Academy Director, Program Director, Graduate Coordinator, Clinical Coordinator, Fieldwork Coordinator or Medical Director with recommendations regarding necessary curriculum/rotation adjustments.
5. As information on infectious diseases is a mandatory disclosure item on a learner’s application to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO), the Faculty of Medicine will provide advice to the learner recommending required disclosure of information to the College regarding his/her immunization/infectious disease status.

### **6.3. GUIDELINES for LEARNERS WITH AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE:**

1. The learner must comply with the infectious diseases surveillance protocols adhered to by the Faculty of Medicine and its affiliated training sites, provide body fluid specimens as requested, and agree to be monitored by an infection control specialist, with regular reporting, if required.
2. All learners are expected to be in a state of health such that they may participate in their academic and clinical programs, including patient care, without posing a risk to themselves or to others. Learners with an infectious disease may pursue their studies only insofar as their continued involvement does not pose a health or safety hazard to themselves or others. Such a health or safety hazard, if protracted, may preclude them from participation in certain aspects of clinical work essential to the satisfactory completion of their program of study.
3. Learners who have symptoms of an acute illness that is likely infectious in etiology should not attend in the teaching site until their symptoms have improved; this includes but is not limited to fever, “colds”, cough, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, rashes, and conjunctivitis. Learners who are absent from mandatory educational activities due to illness should notify



their program in accordance with the program-specific attendance/absence guidelines/policies.

4. The diagnosis of any infectious disease in a learner shall remain confidential within a strict “need to know” environment.

#### **6.4. GUIDELINES regarding LEARNERS’ PARTICIPATION IN CARE OF PATIENTS WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES:**

1. Learners are required to participate in the care of all patients assigned to them, including patients with infectious diseases, to a level commensurate with their level of training. Such participation is necessary for the learner's education as well as for satisfactory completion of academic and clinical training requirements.
2. All learners are expected to understand and adhere to infection control policies, including the principles of Routine Practices and hand hygiene, when participating in the examination and care of all patients, regardless of the diagnosis or known health status of the patient.
3. Learners are responsible for conducting themselves in a manner that is consistent with the health and safety of themselves and others, and shall be given appropriate training to do so. Learners who fail to meet these responsibilities may, depending on the circumstances, face sanctions under the provisions of the University of Toronto Standards of Professional Practice Behaviour for all Health Professional Students<sup>vi</sup>.

#### **6.5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES regarding LEARNERS WHO ARE EXPOSED TO AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE OR OTHER ADVERSE EXPOSURE IN THE COURSE OF THEIR TRAINING:**

1. The Faculty of Medicine requires that all educational programs have published documents outlining the course of action to be taken for learners who incur an injury or other medically-related incident, including an incident that may have placed them at risk of acquiring an infectious disease, during the performance of activities as a part of their educational program. Any such document must provide a course of action to promote both the emotional and physical wellbeing of the learner.
2. Learners are expected to comply with the published documents in 6.5.1. Note: Under the UE:COFM Blood Borne Pathogen Policy Undergraduate Medical Education learners (MD students) are ethically obligated to know their serological status.
3. Learners who develop markers of an infectious disease are required, as per 6.2.2, to inform the responsible party in their educational program of their status. The case will be then be handled as described in 6.2.3.



## **6.6. GUIDELINES on LEARNERS WHO ARE EXPOSED TO AN INFECTIOUS DISEASE OR ADVERSE EXPOSURE DURING THE TIME PERIOD OF TRAINING OUTSIDE TRAINING ACTIVITIES:**

1. Note: Under the UE:COFM Blood Borne Pathogen Policy, Undergraduate Medical Education learners (MD students) are ethically obligated to know their serological status. Learners who may suspect they may have become infected with any of the infectious diseases included in Section 7 should seek medical attention.
2. Learners who develop markers of an infectious disease are required, as per 6.2.2, to inform the responsible party in their educational program of their status. The case will then be handled as described in 6.2.3.

## **6.7. GUIDELINES on CO-RESPONSIBILITY WITH TEACHING SITES:**

The Faculty of Medicine and its teaching sites are jointly responsible for ensuring that learners are adequately instructed in infection control. This will include the following:

1. The Faculty will provide to learners in all educational programs an introductory program on Routine Practices, hand hygiene, and other core competencies of infection control and occupational health, and will inform learners of their responsibilities with respect to infection control and occupational health.
2. All Ontario hospitals are required to comply with the Communicable Diseases Surveillance Protocols for Ontario hospitals developed under the Public Hospital Act, Regulation 965. Compliance with these Protocols requires the hospitals to provide instruction in infection control precautions and occupational health to learners.

## **7. SPECIFIC INFECTIOUS DISEASES INCLUDED IN THIS DOCUMENT but not limited to:**

Blood-borne pathogens:  
HIV/Hepatitis B, C

Enteric pathogens:  
Salmonella / Shigella / Campylobacter / E-coli 0:157/ Norovirus/Rotavirus,

Other:  
Influenza / Meningococcal disease / Measles / Mumps /Rubella / Tuberculosis / Varicella / Pertussis/ Hepatitis A/Adenovirus Conjunctivitis

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<sup>i</sup> Graduate learners who do not have patient contact in their roles, while excluded from these guidelines must comply with existing protocols: graduate learners based on-campus comply with the regulations as set out by the University of Toronto's Office of Environmental Health and Safety and graduate learners based off-campus comply with the protocols of the institute in which they work.

<sup>ii</sup> The Expert Panel on Infection Control is advisory to the Dean, Faculty of Medicine. The Panel addresses matters pertaining to health professional students and learners in all Faculty of Medicine Programs and provides advice in all matters relating to the "Guidelines Regarding Infectious Diseases and Occupational Health for Applicants to and Learners of the Faculty of Medicine Academic Programs"

<sup>iii</sup> Communicable Diseases Surveillance Protocols:

<http://www.oha.com/Services/HealthSafety/Pages/CommunicableDiseasesSurveillanceProtocols.aspx>

<sup>iv</sup> COFM Immunization Policy, November 2010:

<http://www.pgme.utoronto.ca/Assets/PGME+Digital+Assets/immunization/COFM+Imm+Pol.+Nov.+2010.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> UE:COFM Blood Borne Pathogen Policy:

<http://www.md.utoronto.ca/Assets/FacMed+Digital+Assets/ume/registrar/bloodbornepathogen.pdf>.

<sup>vi</sup> Standards of Professional Practice Behaviour for all Health Professional Students, June 2008

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppsep012008i.pdf>.

**Guidelines approved:**

UME Executive – January 17, 2012

HUEC – January 25, 2012

UPAR – February 23, 2012

Medical Radiation Sciences – March 2012

PGMEAC – April 27, 2012

Graduate Affairs – May 23, 2012

Physician Assistant Program – July 16, 2012

Faculty Council, Education Committee – September 20, 2012

Faculty Council, February 11, 2013