



Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

"A Private University with a Public Mission"

Medical Student Exposure to Infectious & Environmental Hazards Policy

POLICY: # 322.8a

Supersedes: Policy 322.8a version 6/23/21 and 10/03/2024

Issuing Officer: Dean, College of Medicine

Responsible Office: Office of Medical Education

Effective EPCC Date: 02/17/2026

Effective University Date: 03/13/2026

Next Review Date: 02/17/2029

PURPOSE:

The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) has established standards regarding the requirement of medical schools to have policies in place that effectively address medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards. (LCME Element 12.8)

I. POLICY STATEMENT:

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU) College of Medicine (COM) MD Program is dedicated to educating its medical students, including visiting medical students, in the provision of health care of the highest quality. It abides by professional values that recognize the primacy of patient welfare and the need to reduce risks to the health of both patients and medical students within the framework of medical education activities.

As outlined in the responsibilities below, this policy defines the processes for:

- medical student education regarding methods of prevention for infectious and environmental hazards;
- care and treatment following an occupational exposure, including financial responsibility at CDU affiliated facilities and while on away electives;

- the effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities.

II. POLICY:

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Medical students are personally responsible for CDU COM requirements regarding student health (such as immunization requirements) and training (such as completion of the annual online Bloodborne Pathogens module).
- Medical students are also responsible for adhering to standard precautions and infection control and prevention policies for CDU as outlined in CDU's Injury and Illness Prevention Program
- Clinical course directors are responsible for disseminating this policy to medical students, including visiting medical students, prior to the start of a clinical rotation.
- It is the responsibility of the faculty member and clinical course director to assure that the specifications of this policy are followed for all medical students, including visiting medical students, of CDU.
- It is the responsibility of the Office of Student Affairs to monitor CDU medical students' compliance of the annual online Bloodborne Pathogens module.
- It is the responsibility of the Office of the Registrar to monitor visiting medical students' compliance of the online Bloodborne Pathogens module and dissemination of this policy prior to the start of a visiting student's clinical rotation.

EDUCATION OF MEDICAL STUDENTS ABOUT METHODS OF PREVENTION OF EXPOSURE

- Medical students shall be introduced to the concepts of infectious and environmental hazards, prevention, and control during medical student orientation.
- Medical students and visiting students shall be educated on standard precautions and techniques for preventing infectious and environmental hazards prior to beginning clinical learning activities.
Medical students are required to take an annual mandatory, online Bloodborne Pathogens module to document that they understand those activities which increase the risk of exposure, strategies for reducing the risk of exposure, and the steps required should they become exposed.
- Policies and procedures related to infectious and environmental hazards are disseminated to students in multiple formats including but not limited to course/clerkship overview documents, course/clerkship orientations, and blackboard. CDU medical students receive ongoing education on how to protect themselves and their colleagues from exposure to infectious and environmental hazards through their clinical training.
- All clinical students are required to participate in education related to COVID-19, including training related to the use of personal protective equipment, i.e. equipment used to reduce the risk of the wearer or patient from acquiring a health care associated infection.
- All medical students, including visiting students, receive an ID badge which includes contact information for the Nursing Officer in case of a needlestick or other exposure.
- Medical students, including visiting medical students, must strictly adhere to the standard precautions and infection control and prevention policies of CDU, including appropriate hand washing, using recommended protective barriers, and taking meticulous care in the use and disposal of needles and other sharp instruments when on any clinical assignment (including, but not limited to clerkships, sub-internships, and electives) at CDU and its affiliates.

PROCEDURES FOR CARE AND TREATMENT AFTER EXPOSURE AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Access to assessment, counseling, and treatment will be available to medical students incurring exposure to potentially infectious bodily fluids or blood via needle sticks or other accidental contact.
- In the event of an exposure, medical students should immediately inform their supervisor and/or clinical course/clerkship director and when indicated treat the exposure site:
 - Wash the exposed skin with soap and water as soon as possible after exposure.
 - Flush exposed mucus membranes with water.
 - Flush eyes with at least 500 ml of water or normal saline for at least 15 minutes.
 - Do not apply disinfectants, antibiotics or caustic agents to the wound.
 - Proceed to the Emergency Department for further first aid as needed.
- Students must contact the Chief Nursing Officer at exposure@cdrewu.edu and Office of Student Affairs at exposure@cdrewu.edu for further guidance regarding the procedures for care and treatment including post-exposure counseling and follow-up.
- Submission of fees and expenses related to follow-up for student CDU exposure are the responsibility of the student and should be submitted to the student's health insurance carrier for payment. All CDU students are required to maintain active health insurance to cover health needs related to such exposure. Worker's Compensation is not applicable for students.
- For any medical fees and expenses related to the exposure not covered by the student's health insurance will be covered by CDU. A request for payment or reimbursement must be submitted by email along with an itemized bill, Explanation of Benefits (EOB) from insurance company, and a paid receipt to the Office of Students Affairs within 30 days from the date the student's insurance claim is approved/denied.
- If a needle stick or exposure occurs while a student is on an away elective immediate evaluation and treatment will be available within the guidelines and policies of that institution or facility. Students may be referred to a local emergency department. Students are encouraged to contact the CDU Nursing Officer or their primary care physician for reporting and follow-up as soon as they are able to do so. Any treatment or laboratory cost associated with the initial exposure management and treatment should be submitted to the student's health care insurer. Students on an away elective should follow the above procedures for reimbursement of uncovered medical expenses. Visiting medical students are responsible for the costs of their evaluation, testing and treatment.

EFFECTS OF INFECTIOUS AND/OR ENVIRONMENTAL DISEASE OR DISABILITY ON MEDICAL STUDENT EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

CDU COM MD Program fulfills its obligation to educate future physicians while adhering to procedures that maintain the health and safety of patients and that protect the personal rights of medical students with infectious diseases or immunocompromised conditions.

Students with infectious or communicable illnesses or with an immune compromising condition should consult with the CDU Chief Nursing Officer at exposure@cdrewu.edu regarding the advisability of working with patients including any limitations or other concerns as relate to his or her clinical duties and educational activities.

CDU will attempt to provide reasonable alternative experiences to ensure the student meets curricular requirements. However, patient and student safety are paramount; therefore, in certain situations, students with such conditions may not be able to meet the curricular requirements to advance and/or

graduate from CDU COM MD program. In some cases, in consultation with the CDU Chief Nursing Officer, medical students with infectious diseases and/or immune compromising conditions may be referred to the associate dean of admissions and student affairs for additional counseling related to the impact of the condition upon the student's professional trajectory.

For students requiring accommodations to complete the curriculum, these accommodations are managed under the CDU COM MD Program Technical Standards Policy in collaboration with Student Disability Services. Students should contact Student Disability Services if accommodations are needed due to implications of infectious and/or environmental disease exposure.

III. APPLICABILITY:

The faculty, students, and staff of the CDU COM are responsible for knowing this policy and its procedures.

IV. DEFINITIONS:

- **Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP):** BBPs are pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood that can cause disease in humans. These include, but are not limited to, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV)
- **Biohazardous Material/Infectious Agents:** Biohazards are infectious agents or hazardous biological materials that present a risk or potential risk to the health of humans, animals or the environment. The risk can be direct through infection or indirect through damage to the environment. Biohazardous materials include certain types of recombinant DNA blood, body fluids, organisms and viruses infectious to humans, animals or plants (e.g. parasites, viruses, bacterial, fungi, prions, rickettsia); and biologically active agents (e.g. toxins, allergens, venoms) that may cause disease in other living organisms or cause significant impact to the environment or community.
- **Hazardous materials:** Any material that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical and chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or environment. They include carcinogens, teratogens, heavy metals, and radioactive materials/radiation emitting equipment.
- **Occupational exposure:** A reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with human blood or other potentially infectious materials that may result from the performance of an individual's work duties.
- **Standard Precautions:** Designed for care of all patients in facilitates, regardless of diagnosis or presumed infection status, to reduce the risk of transmission from both recognized and unrecognized sources of infection. This includes proper hand hygiene and appropriate personal protective equipment.
- **Visiting Student:** Non-CDU student enrolled at another medical school who is participating in clinical elective learning experiences for a grade sponsored by CDU

V. RELATED POLICIES:

Technical Standards Policy

VI. RELATED LINKS:

- CDU Injury and Illness Prevention Program
- CDU Emergency Response Plan
- LCME Standards, Publications, & Notification [Forms](#)

VII. POLICY HISTORY:

Review Dates:	Change Description:
06/23/21	New policy approved by the EPCC
02/1/23	Updated to specify that CDU will pay for any medical fees and expenses not covered by the student's health insurance.
02/17/2026	Updated to specify that the role formerly covered by CDU's Office of Risk Management has been transitioned to the CDU Chief Nursing Officer. Approved by the EPCC.
03/13/2026	Reviewed by the University Policy Committee with no conflicts.