Prevention and Management of Body Fluid Exposure During Clinical Education

Overview:
The Medical College of Georgia is committed to promoting the prevention of communicable disease transmission among its faculty, staff, students, and the patients they serve through a program that includes education, immunizations, safe environments, promotion of universal precautions, and other approved measures that are considered standard of care. This policy seeks to (1) protect students, faculty, staff, and patients from communicable disease transmission, (2) maintain the confidentiality of infected persons, and (3) identify procedures for accommodation for medical student learning activities resulting from infectious and environmental disease or disability.

Immunizations:
- All MCG students must comply with state law, Augusta University policy, and where appropriate, health system and residence hall requirements.
- At the current time, these requirements include evidence of immunization and/or proof of immunity with serological titer against Mumps, Rubella, Rubeola, Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Varicella, and Hepatitis B.
- Immunization compliance is managed by student health from acceptance through graduation, not student affairs.
- The MCG student health committee reviews and provides input into the immunization policy on an annual basis. Student health services monitors the immunization status of medical students from admission through graduation.
- Students may obtain immunizations with any provider. Immunizations are available to accepted or enrolled students at student health, in both Augusta and Athens. Students are responsible to pay the balance between that covered by insurance and the usually discounted fee offered by student health.

Education on Prevention:
MCG’s Policy Medical Student Education on Prevention of Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards in the Clinical Setting outlines the process for educating medical students about methods of prevention. The policy states:

The Medical College of Georgia requires education and training for all students in appropriate methods to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases, including blood-borne pathogens. The educational program will include content defined by CDC developed guidelines for such training. The training is presented during the students initial Med 1 orientation, and annually thereafter during orientation. Students will take a test to confirm understanding of the material. Students are given explicit instructions on what procedures to follow, where to go for initial evaluation and follow up should they be exposed.

Exposure Policies and Procedures:
- Students are given instructions on what procedures to follow, where to go for initial evaluation and follow-up should they be exposed.
- MCG’s Blood Borne Pathogen Exposures-Student and Source Policy defines the proper procedures that students should follow in the event of environmental exposure. The procedures are printed on a card that is to be attached to each student’s ID badge, and is carried by the student during all clinical activities. Visiting students also receive a card and are informed of this policy when they receive the Phase 3 Policies and Procedures document.
• Per policy, all students must report an environmental exposure to Student Health Services who will then manage all testing and appropriate follow-up. Student health providers discuss the exposure and treatment with the student. If the student becomes infected, s/he receives appropriate counseling based on the current standard of care, as documented in such publications as the American Guidelines for Management of Healthcare Workers Who Are Infected with Hepatitis B Virus, Hepatitis C Virus, and/or Human Immunodeficiency Virus published by the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology (SHEA).

• Students exposed to contaminated body fluids are expected to follow the instructions on the cards that all students are issued, and include campus-specific instructions.

• Treatment and monitoring for infectious diseases is managed by student health.

• Additionally, MCG has purchased exposure insurance for all M3 and M4 students to cover initial evaluation and testing for body fluid exposure within the first 30 days post-exposure. Thereafter, students with exposures submit claims for coverage to their own insurance policy and are responsible for the cost of further evaluation and treatment.

Educational Accommodations

• MCG will use all reasonable methods to balance the educational needs of the student, and both the privacy and health care issues for the individual student and patients.

• Students who are infected with potentially communicable agents (e.g. hepatitis B, hepatitis C, or HIV) are expected to discuss this with their physician at Student Health. The student will receive appropriate counseling according to the current standard of care.

• If the Student Health physician believes that a modification of the usual clinical activities of the medical student is required as a result of infection with a communicable agent, the MCG curriculum dean will be notified with the consent of the student.

• All reasonable accommodations will be made to assist the student in achieving the requirements of the educational program. Upon notice by student health, the curriculum dean will reasonably accommodate the educational needs of the student by developing alternate educational activities that meet the educational requirements of the program if possible. The Senior Associate Dean for Curriculum dean may convene a faculty panel to assist in the process.

• A student, when provided reasonable accommodations, must be able to perform the routine duties and minimum requirements for each course/clinical assignment, and meet the technical standards for enrollment at MCG.

Approved by Dean’s Cabinet, Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Dean: 12/14/2015