

# HIV AND HEPATITIS VIRUSES POLICY

## I. Statement of Need

The Dental Hygiene Program at West Liberty University is dedicated to providing preventive dental hygiene care of the highest quality. The faculty, staff, and students who work at the West Liberty University Dental Hygiene Program are guided by ethical principles which obligate health care professionals to be of benefit, to do no harm, and to respect the autonomy, privacy, and confidentiality of each person.

The health care environment has always presented a risk of injury or illness to both patient and professionals as a consequence of dental care. For this reason, the Dental Hygiene Program has a program designed for Infection Control.

The AIDS epidemic has added a new dimension of risk to patients and professionals.

Human

Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is known to be transmitted from infected patients to providers.

There is a smaller possibility that this virus can be transmitted from infected health care professionals to patients. Hepatitis B (HBV) is associated with a higher risk of transmission from health care worker to patient. The policy describes procedures that the Dental Hygiene Program follows to minimize such risks. The rights and responsibilities of all the faculty, staff, and students in the Dental Hygiene Program with regard to treatment of patients with HIV and HBV infection are also listed.

## II. Dental Hygiene Faculty, Staff, and Student Responsibilities HIV/HBV-Infected Patients

- A. Dental Hygiene faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility to treat HIV/HBV-infected patients compassionately and humanely.
- B. Dental Hygiene faculty, staff, and students who engage in patient contact may not ethically or legally refuse to treat a patient whose condition is within the realm of competence solely because the patient is infected with HIV/HBV.
- C. Dental Hygiene faculty, staff, and students who engage in patient contact are ethically and legally obligated to respect the rights of privacy and of confidentiality of HIV/HBV-infected patients as required by the laws of West Virginia.
- D. Dental Hygiene faculty, staff, and students with medical conditions (for example, impaired immune system or exudative skin lesions) that place them at high risk of acquiring infections and who feel that assigned clinical responsibilities for HIV/HBV-infected patients pose a significant health risk to them should consult their personal physician (students may consult the physician at the University Health Service). If the consulted physician agrees that a significant health risk exists, the faculty, staff, or student must notify the Chair of the Dental Hygiene Department in writing. In the event of difference of opinion regarding health risk, the Provost of the University shall be the final judge.
- E. Physicians and dentists at West Liberty University are obligated to provide pre- and post-test counseling in accordance with state law when they order an HIV-antibody test. Physicians and dentists who cannot provide the counseling must refer patients to health professionals who can. West

Virginia code, Section 16-3C-2 governs this activity. (A copy of the code is available in the West

Liberty University Library and the Dental Hygiene Clinic Handbook binder kept in the clinic.)

- F. The Dental Hygiene Program shall provide instruction regarding HIV/HBV infection and the Center for Disease Control's Guidelines on Universal Blood and Body Fluid Precautions to all faculty, staff, and students, as well as the relevance of HIV/HBV infection to their personal health, medical practice, public health, and their professional careers.
- G. All who engage in patient contact shall follow Universal Blood and Body Fluid Precautions in all patient care to minimize the risk of transmission of HIV/HBV infection. The Dental Hygiene Program shall make available essential supplies and equipment to allow compliance with Universal Blood and Body Fluid Precautions.

### **III. Responsibilities of HIV/HBV-Infected Dental Hygiene Program Faculty, Staff, and Students.**

- A. Dental Hygiene Program faculty, staff, and students who know that they are positive for HIV antibody or Hepatitis B Surface antigen shall consult the expert review panel (See IV.B) as to procedures to be followed.
- B. All HIV/HBV-infected faculty, staff, and students in the Dental Hygiene Program who engage in patient care must report their medical condition to the Chair of the Department of Dental Hygiene, or the Dean of their College.
- C. The Chairperson or his/her designee will assist HIV/HBV- infected faculty, staff, or students in managing occupational risks and obtaining education and career counseling. The Chairperson may suggest sources of appropriate medical care.
- D. Faculty, staff, and students who in retrospect learn they have performed invasive procedures while HIV/HBV-infected shall notify the Chairperson who shall consult the expert review panel (See IV B) to ascertain if a "look-back" program and patient notification are appropriate.
- E. Refusal by HIV/HBV-infected faculty, staff, or students in the Dental Hygiene Program to adhere to this policy constitutes grounds for disciplinary action, up to dismissal, in accordance with West Liberty University and West Virginia Board of Directors policies.

### **IV. Responsibility of West Liberty University Dental Hygiene Program to HIV/HBV-Infected Faculty, Staff and Students**

- A. The Dental Hygiene Program has a commitment to confidentiality, protection against unlawful discrimination, and reasonable accommodation for its faculty, staff, and students in accordance with applicable state and federal law.
- B. The Provost of the University shall appoint an expert review panel to make recommendations concerning "look-back" programs and patient notification. This panel shall consist of:
  - 1. University Medical Director
  - 2. Ohio County Health Department Director/Representative
  - 3. Hospital Infectious Control Physician/Nurse/Coordinator
  - 4. Chair of the Department of Dental Hygiene

This panel shall make recommendations as quickly as possible.

**V. Needle stick or Other Injuries by Sharp Instruments or Mucous Membrane Exposure to Department Dental Hygiene Faculty, Staff, and Students**

- A. Dental Hygiene Program faculty, staff, and students who are penetrated by a needle or other sharp instrument or who have their mucous membranes exposed by aerosols or splash from blood or body fluids from patients shall report the injury promptly.
- B. The completion of an "Exposure/Incident Report" is mandatory. Exposure/Incident Report forms are kept in the clinic and in the Program Director's office.
- C. Upon completion of the Exposure/Incident Report, exposed person and identified source will be referred to either the University Health Services during normal business hours or to Doctor's Urgent Care after 3:00 PM. Failure to report to the referred Health Service may result in disciplinary action.

**VI. HIV Testing of the Dental Hygiene Program Faculty, Staff, and Students**

Routine serologic testing for HIV is not required. Those health care professionals whose duties are likely to expose them to patients' blood or body fluids shall receive the HBV vaccine, show proof of protection, or sign a waiver/Hepatitis B Declination. They are encouraged to consider being tested for HIV and other blood-borne viruses through their personal physician or alternative testing. If breaks in infection control technique results in exposure of a patient to a professional's blood, the professional should undergo HIV/HBV testing, and if the HIV test is positive report his/her condition to the Chair of the Department of Dental Hygiene who shall consult the expert review panel regarding whether a "look-back" program or patient notification is necessary