

# Medical Student Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards Policy

**Category:** Academic  
**Responsibility:** Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education  
**Approval:** Student Academic Management Committee  
**Date:** Approved Nov 15 2016, revised July 3 2017, updated August 2019, updated August 2021, updated October 2023, updated October 2024,

## Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to promote the health, safety, and well-being of medical students in the Undergraduate Medical Education program. This policy establishes college-level requirements for preparing, preventing, and responding to exposure incidents.

This policy ensures that the Undergraduate Medical Education program meets or exceeds the following Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) accreditation standards:

12.8 Student Exposure Policies and Procedures: A medical school has policies in place that effectively address medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards, including: a) The education of medical students about methods of prevention. b) The procedures for care and treatment after exposure, including a definition of financial responsibility. c) The effects of infectious and environmental disease or disability on medical student learning activities. All registered medical students (including visiting students) are informed of these policies before undertaking any educational activities that would place them at risk.

## Principles:

The College of Medicine acknowledges that its faculty, staff, and students can be exposed to infectious and environmental hazards atypical of other academic programs at the University of Saskatchewan. As such, the development and implementation of this policy is guided by the principles of preparedness and safety.

## Definitions:

**Exposure Incident:** refers to an injury or exposure to an infectious and environmental hazard.

## Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to all undergraduate students applying to or registered in the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program at the University of Saskatchewan irrespective of the geographically distributed site to which they are currently assigned.

Related college-level policies include: [Blood Borne Pathogens Policy](#) (PGME). Related

university-level policies include: [U of S Health and Safety Policy](#) (University of

[Saskatchewan](#))

Related affiliated health care facility policies include: [Guidelines for the Management of Exposures to Blood or Body Fluids](#) (Saskatchewan Health Authority)

Related regulatory policies include: [Blood-Borne Viruses: Screening, Reporting and Monitoring of Physicians/Medical Students](#) (College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan)

Related Worker's Compensation Board procedures and forms: [Student WCB FAQs.pdf](#)

## **Policy:**

### **1.0 Preparedness for Environmental Hazards**

Medical students should be introduced to the concepts of infectious and environmental hazard, prevention, and control in their first year of studies in the Undergraduate Medical Education program. Furthermore, medical students should be educated in universal precautions and techniques for infectious and environmental hazards prior to beginning clinical learning activities.

### **2.0 Prevention of Environmental Hazards**

Medical students can be exposed to infectious and environmental hazards atypical of other academic programs at the University of Saskatchewan. They are expected to take reasonable precautions to avoid environmental hazards and take appropriate preventative measures to protect themselves and others from infectious disease. It is the responsibility of all faculty, staff, and medical students to notify the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education in a timely manner of the existence of any infectious or environmental hazards that might affect undergraduate medical students.

### **3.0 Exposure to Environmental Hazards**

Medical students who experience an exposure incident in a University of Saskatchewan facility should follow the reporting and follow-up requirements of the relevant University of Saskatchewan environmental health and safety policies then in effect.

Medical students who experience an exposure incident in an affiliated health care facility should follow the reporting and follow-up requirements of the affiliated health care center's relevant environmental health and safety policies then in effect.

Medical students who experience an exposure incident in a non-affiliated institution should follow the reporting and follow-up requirements of that institution's relevant environmental health and safety policies then in effect.

Medical students who experience an injury as a result of an exposure incident during a clinical placement should follow the relevant WCB reporting requirements.

#### **4.0 Reporting of Environmental Hazards**

In addition to the complying with reporting requirements at the University of Saskatchewan or an affiliated health care facility, medical students who experience an exposure incident should also submit a *University of Saskatchewan Incident Report*. The student must also send a copy of the incident report to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, and Manager, Undergraduate Medical Education.

#### **5.0 Effects on Medical Student Learning Activities**

Medical students whose learning activity is interrupted as a result of an exposure incident should contact the Manager, Undergraduate Medical Education, as soon as possible. Upon verification, the Year Chair in collaboration with the Director, Student Services or Office of Student Affairs should communicate with related faculty regarding the medical student's absence and, where necessary, to accommodate an alternative educational or clinical activity.

In the event of infection with a blood-borne pathogen that could potentially impact safety of patients or other health care providers, the student and Associate Dean, UGME, will advise the College of Physicians and Surgeons of SK and restrictions on clinical practice during the educational program may be applied, as per the CPSS Policy.

#### **6.0 Financial Responsibility**

Financial costs for post-exposure prophylaxis, should the consulting Infectious Diseases physician deem it warranted, is borne by the Government of Saskatchewan for students who are Saskatchewan residents. For visiting students who are not Saskatchewan residents, the student may have coverage through their home province or private health care plan, and if not, the costs associated with post-exposure prophylaxis will be the responsibility of the medical student.

Similarly, ongoing costs of treatment of an infectious disease acquired as a result of an exposure will be covered through the provincial health coverage or private health insurance, as applicable. Medical students are required to participate in the medical plan provided through the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union (USSU) or in a comparable plan that provides coverage for treatment arising from such incidents. For visiting students who are not Saskatchewan residents, the student may have coverage through their home province or private health care plan, and if not, the costs associated with ongoing treatment will be the responsibility of the medical student.

Students who sustain an injury or illness as a result of an exposure during a work placement may be eligible for WCB benefits (such as treatment costs) as per Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board guidelines. Visiting elective students should contact their relevant provincial compensation board for coverage information.

### **Responsibilities**

The Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, is responsible for providing oversight to the overall administration of the *Medical Student Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards Policy* at the College of Medicine.

The Manager, Undergraduate Medical Education, is responsible for the implementation, monitoring, maintenance, and evaluation of the *Medical Student Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards Policy* at the College of Medicine. This includes the development and stewardship of the standard operating procedures associated with this policy.

The Student Academic Management Committee is responsible for evaluating, reviewing, and updating this policy every three years.

### **Non-compliance:**

Instances or concerns of non-compliance with the *Medical Student Exposure to Infectious and Environmental Hazards Policy* should be brought to the attention of the Vice-Dean, Education or the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education, within the College of Medicine.

### **Procedures:**

Related university-level procedural documents include: [University of Saskatchewan Incident Report Form](#)

Related UGME program procedural documents include: [Blood or Body Fluid Exposure Procedure](#)

### **Contact:**

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