

Communicable Diseases and Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

I. Communicable Disease

Communicable diseases, those that have serious effects on human health, can pose a threat to the College community. The College will take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of members of the College community during global and local infectious disease events. "Communicable disease" is defined as an illness due to a specific infectious agent or its toxic products that arises through transmission of that agent or its products from an infected person, animal, or reservoir to a susceptible host, either directly, or indirectly through an intermediate plant or animal host, vector, or the inanimate environment. Examples of communicable disease include, but are not limited to, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), chicken pox, hepatitis, measles, tuberculosis, meningitis, mononucleosis, whooping cough, coronavirus, and other viral diseases that reach a pandemic level, and for purposes of this Policy only, those communicable diseases which constitute a disability pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The College shall not exclude individuals diagnosed with communicable diseases from participation in College programs or activities unless a determination is made that the individual presents a health risk to himself/herself or others. The College shall consider the educational or employment status of those individuals diagnosed with a communicable disease on a case-by-case individual basis.

1. Communications and Confidentiality

- a. All information and records that identify a student or employee as having a communicable disease shall be strictly confidential and shall not be shared or disclosed to others without express permission from the student or employee.
- b. Disclosure of medical information shall be made by the President, or his/her designee, only to those on a need-to-know basis in order to protect the welfare of persons infected with a communicable disease or the welfare of other members of the College community.
- c. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential student or personnel information by an employee of the College is prohibited. Violation of this prohibition may result in the suspension from, or termination of, an individual's employment with the College.
- d. A person who knows or has a reasonable basis for believing that s/he is infected with a communicable disease is expected to seek expert advice about his/her health circumstances and is obligated ethically and legally to conduct himself/herself responsibly toward other members of the College community.
- e. Faculty and staff of the College and employees of contractors, or contracted services, who are infected with a communicable disease are urged to notify the appropriate Dean/Director so that the College can respond appropriately to his/her health needs. Students are urged to share information with the appropriate Dean/Director for the same reason.
- f. A person infected with a communicable disease (including the AIDS virus whether active AIDS, AIDS-Related Complex, or undetectable viral load) will not be excluded from enrollment or employment or restricted in his/her access to the College's services or facilities unless, in individual cases, the College

administration determines that exclusion or other restrictions are necessary for the health and welfare of the College community.

- g. Included in making decisions in individual cases which restrict access to employment or a student's education, programs or activities shall be the College President, Legal Counsel for the College, the Deans/Directors, the individual's personal physician, the local Health Director (or designee) and if necessary, another physician with expertise in managing communicable disease cases.
- h. The College shall provide information regarding communicable diseases, including AIDS.

2. Immunizations

Proof of immunizations are not required for employment or admission by Isothermal Community College. While Isothermal Community College does not mandate that employees or students receive vaccinations, clinical facilities/program sites reserve the right to mandate vaccinations for employees and/or students who work in certain programs, including but not limited to, Basic Law Enforcement Training, Associate Degree Nursing, Practical Nursing, and Dental Assisting. Employees and students must comply with the policies and procedures of the clinical/program host sites. If an employee or student chooses not to comply with these policies and expectations, they may not be able to perform any duties at clinical/program host sites requiring vaccinations. In compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, exemptions for vaccines based on medical or religious reasons may be requested. Employees and/or students may be required to submit adequate documentation to support these claims and the determination for granting exemptions comes from the clinical/program site. In such cases where an employee fails to meet clinical/program site policy requirements and a reasonable accommodation cannot be provided, the employee will be removed from the responsibilities assigned at the site, which may result in an inability to fulfill employment requirements. In the event that a student fails to meet clinical/program site policy requirements and a reasonable accommodation cannot be provided, the student will be unable to complete the related course requirements, which may result in failure of the course and may impact the student's ability to progress in the program.

1. Public Health Incidents

Should influenza, or any other communicable disease, reach a pandemic level, the President shall regularly monitor the situation by communicating with federal, state and/or local health officials and by reviewing media sources.

Should any communicable disease reach a pandemic or epidemic level within or near the College's service area, the President, after consulting with local, state or federal health officials, may take the following actions if it is determined to be in the best interest of the College community to prevent the spread of the communicable disease:

1. Close the College or certain College buildings and/or programs temporarily;
2. Limit or prohibit employee travel and/or student field trips;
3. Prohibit those infected with a communicable disease from coming onto the College campus;
4. To the extent allowed by law, requiring or encouraging employees and students to receive testing and immunizations (not already required by the College) that

- prevent the spread of a communicable disease before coming back onto the College campus; and
5. Other specific actions deemed necessary for the safety of the College community.

The President shall not quarantine any student or employee while on campus unless the quarantine is ordered by local, state or federal health officials. Persons who are infected with a communicable disease that has reached a pandemic level, or know of someone in the College community who is infected, should contact College officials immediately. Students should contact the Dean of Student Services and employees should contact the Human Resources Office for reporting under this policy.

Any actions undertaken pursuant to this policy will be in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, College policies, and in the best interest of all parties.

II. Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

The College shall comply with federal regulations and state statutes regarding bloodborne pathogens as set forth in the Federal Register, 29 CFR §1910.1030, and the North Carolina Administrative Code, 10A NCAC 41A, by attempting to limit/prevent occupational exposure of employees to blood or other potentially infectious bodily fluids and materials that may transmit bloodborne pathogens and lead to disease or death.

1. Reasonably Anticipated Occupational Exposure

An employee who could "reasonably anticipate", as a result of performing required job duties, to face contact with blood, bodily fluids or other potentially infectious materials is covered by the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard, the North Carolina Administrative Code, and this Policy. "Occupational Exposure" includes any reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane or parenteral (brought into the body through some way other than the digestive tract) contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that may result from the performance of an employee's duties. "Good Samaritan" acts, such as assisting a co-worker or student with a nosebleed would not be considered "reasonably anticipated occupational exposure."

2. Universal Precautions

Universal precautions will be always in force. All blood, body fluid and other potentially infectious material will be handled as if infected. The program standards for the control of potential exposure to HIV and HBV as outlined in the OSHA Rule "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" Standard 1910.1030, the NC Administrative Codes, or the most current standards available will be followed.

3. Testing

An employee who suspects that s/he has had exposure to blood or body fluid may request to be tested, at the College's expense, provided that the suspected exposure poses a significant risk of transmission, as defined in the rules of the Commission for Health Services. The HIV and HBV testing of a person who is the source of an exposure that poses a significant risk of transmission will be conducted in accordance with 10A NC Administrative Code 41A .0202 (4) (HIV) and 41A .0203(b)(3) (HBV). The College will strictly adhere to existing confidentiality rules and laws regarding employees with communicable diseases, including HIV or HIV-associated conditions.

4. Exposure Control Compliance

The College shall comply with OSHA Regulation 29 CFR 1910.1030 and promote a healthy and safe environment for both employees and students. The College proposes to do this through minimizing the risk of transmission of infectious diseases that are blood or body fluid borne. To achieve compliance with OSHA Regulation 29 CFR 1910.1030, the College will maintain an Exposure Control Plan covering the following areas:

- a. Procedures,
- b. Protective equipment,
- c. Hepatitis vaccinations,
- d. Post-exposure and follow-up care, and
- e. Training

A copy of the Exposure Control Plan is available in the office of Administrative Services.

Policy Number: 02.01.09

Legal Reference:

29 CFR §1910.1030; 10A NCAC 41A;
10A NC Administrative Code 41A .0202 (4) (HIV) and
41A .0203(b)(3) (HBV); 1C SBCCC 200.94

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