

Dental Hygiene Program Specific Bloodborne Pathogens (rev. 07/07/2025)

- (A) The dental hygiene program adheres to and operates under Stark State College's (SSC) Policy and Procedure on bloodborne infectious diseases (Policy No.: 3357:15-14-16).
- (B) Activities which may be reasonably anticipated to have a risk of exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials will occur in the Dental Hygiene Program. In accordance with College policy, the program has a written and continually monitored occupational exposure control plan. The comprehensive plan is based on current Standard Precaution concepts and practices. All students, faculty, and staff shall adhere to program protocols during every patient interaction and when handling any bodily fluid or substance to prevent and control the spread of infection.
- (C) Potential program applicants should be alerted to the occupational risk for infectious diseases and the availability of the policy on bloodborne infectious diseases that addresses applicants and students who may have an infectious disease. The dental hygiene application should reinforce that the Dental Hygiene Clinic accepts patients from the general populations, some of whom may have or may be at risk for bloodborne infectious diseases.
- (D) In addition to College Policy and Procedure 3357:15-14-16, the program has further clarified its policies and procedures as they relate to program students, applicants, faculty, appropriate staff, and patients in the following paragraphs (D1-D5). This information is accessible to all individuals on the Stark State College website (Dental Clinic). The College's Policy and Procedure as well as the Dental Hygiene Program Policy and Procedure documents are provided directly to enrolled program students, faculty, and appropriate staff.

(D1) APPLICANTS who have bloodborne infectious and diseases:

- a) SSC is committed to the protection of the rights of its students in pursuit of their educational goals. Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended) specifies that a college may not limit the number of students with disabilities admitted, make preadmission inquiries as to whether or not an applicant has a disability, use admission tests or criteria that inadequately measure the academic qualifications of students with disabilities because special provisions were not made, exclude a qualified student with a disability from any course of study, or establish rules and policies that may adversely affect students with disabilities.
- b) Selection of applicants for the Dental Hygiene Program is made based upon published admission requirements. In accordance with the College's EEO Policy on discrimination (approved by the Board of Trustees, June 19, 2013), all admissions are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, military status, pregnancy, disability, age, genetic information, or sexual orientation.

(D2) STUDENTS who have bloodborne infectious diseases:

General Statements:

- a) SSC does not routinely screen students for communicable diseases unless and until required to do so by law, because communicable diseases may have different modes of transmission and should be evaluated on an individual basis. Students who know they are HIV positive are

encouraged to report this fact to an appropriate health care agency or their personal physician so that they can obtain appropriate medical care, consultation and counseling for their own protection and that of others.

b) Information disclosed to SSC personnel by students with bloodborne infectious diseases shall be addressed with respect to the rules of confidentiality.

c) Students requesting accommodations must have appropriate medical documentation on file with the Disability Support Services Coordinator.

d) SSC will make every reasonable attempt to enable a student who has an infectious disease to complete the requirements of his/her educational program. Students may have their educational program modified by the college to limit any potential risk of disease transmission. Restrictions of any clinical assignment and/or off campus clinical assignment will be made on a case-by-case basis after consideration by the review team.

e) Students who have contracted an infectious disease must be evaluated prior to entering the campus clinic, extramural clinical site(s) and/or classroom college lab.

f) For students engaged in health care who have AIDS, there is an increased danger from infection due to disease they may come in contact with at class, in the clinical setting, or in the work place. Students with AIDS, who have defective immunity, are at risk of acquiring or experiencing serious complications of such diseases. Of particular concern is the risk of severe infection following exposure to patient with infectious diseases that are easily transmitted if appropriate precautions are not take (e.g. tuberculosis or chicken pox). Students with AIDS will be counseled about potential risk associated with exposure to or taking care of patients with transmissible infections and should continue to follow infection control protocols to minimize their risk of exposure to other infectious agents.

Faculty / Staff Responsibilities:

a) Standard Precautions shall be incorporated through the Dental Hygiene curriculum. Faculty will regularly update practices and instruction according to currently accepted standards as defined by the Centers for Disease Control. Faculty will monitor student compliance in all program activities.

b) Faculty and staff may not discourage students from pursuing the field of study if the student is progressing appropriately and is otherwise qualified. Faculty must provide instruction in the manner provided all other students unless accommodations are prescribed.

c) Faculty or staff in whom a student confides must respect and apply the rules of confidentiality and must follow College policy.

d) Faculty or staff who questions the appropriateness of requested accommodations should contact the Disability Support Services Coordinator. They should continue to provide accommodations during issue resolution.

Student Responsibilities:

- a) Students shall value and recognize the critical importance of understanding the concepts and adhering to the practice of Standard Precautions relative to themselves and others with whom they may have contact in the learning and work environments.
- b) Students must follow the established protocol in managing and reporting exposure-risk incidents in the learning environment.
- c) Students who have an infectious disease shall take means to prevent the transmission of the disease to patients and all other individuals to whom transmission may be possible. They should seek personal counseling, if needed. Students who are aware of their condition and engage in behavior which threatens other students, patients or SSC personnel, may be subject to disciplinary action.
- d) The ability of a student with an infectious disease to safely perform course assignments should be evaluated by a health practitioner on a regular basis.

(D3) Dental Hygiene Program FACULTY and STAFF who have bloodborne infectious diseases:

- a) Faculty and staff who have contracted an infectious disease must be evaluated prior to entering the campus clinic, off campus clinical site(s) and/or classroom college lab.
- b) A College employee who refuses to treat/instruct/work with an individual who has an infectious disease shall first be directed to a medical expert designated by the college to help allay his/her fears. If refusal persists, the employee is not excused from fulfilling assigned responsibilities. Such refusal can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. If the employee requests a transfer, the request will be handled according to standard college operating procedures.
- c) Faculty and staff shall adhere to the department's protocols of practicing Standard Precautions during every patient interaction and when handling any bodily fluid or substance.
- d) Faculty and staff shall follow the prescribed management protocol for exposure incidents and file the required incident reports.

(D4) PATIENTS who have bloodborne infectious diseases:

- a) The Dental Hygiene program accepts as patient any persons infected with agents of bloodborne infectious diseases provided that their health status does not preclude dental treatment and their dental requirements are consistent with the department's educational goals. The plan of treatment may be modified by the stage of the disease. This policy pertains to all communicable diseases including HIV, and HBV, HCV, and HDV.
- b) The medical history form to be completed by each patient will include specific questions regarding bloodborne infectious diseases. Disclosure by the patient is voluntary.
- c) Patients who disclose seropositivity will be treated as all other patients unless treatment plan modifications are necessitated by the state of the disease.

d) Patient record confidentiality will be maintained in the manner established for all patient records.

e) Standard Precautions will be adhered to before during and after all patient contacts.

f) Students are expected to treat patients with infectious diseases. When assigned these patients, they will treat them with respect as they would any other assigned patient. The plan of treatment may require modification.

(D5) PROTECTION OF DENTAL CARE PERSONNEL in caring for patients who may have bloodborne infectious diseases:

General Statements:

HIV has been isolated from human blood, semen, breast milk, vaginal secretions, saliva, tears, urine, cerebrospinal fluid and amniotic fluid. Epidemiologic evidence implicates only blood, semen, vaginal secretions, and breast milk in the transmission of the virus. Preliminary studies have demonstrated that there is an unidentified factor in human saliva that appears to inactivate HIV. In addition to saliva, dental health care workers are routinely exposed to blood, some of which may contain HIV. Although the occupational risk for contracting HIV is low for dental hygiene personnel, the established protocols for Standard Precautions must be meticulously adhered to for patients at known risk of having HIV or other infectious diseases.

At least eight types of hepatitis have been reported in the medical literature. These include hepatitis forms transmitted by the fecal-oral route (transmitted by food or fluid contaminated with feces such as HAV and HEV). These forms of hepatitis do not result in a carrier state, so carry no bloodborne risk of transmission to the oral healthcare worker during treatment. Bloodborne hepatitis forms include HBV, HCV, HDV, non-ABCDE hepatitis, and HTTV. The two most significant bloodborne hepatitis infections are HBV and HCV because they are capable of developing into a carrier state. Health care workers are considered to be at risk for contracting bloodborne infections such as hepatitis and HIV.

a) A mechanism for the prompt evaluation, counseling, and treatment of exposed workers (students, faculty, and/or staff) has been established with Mercy Work, Health, and Safety, a local health care facility. Students, faculty, and staff are strongly encouraged to seek prompt evaluation, counseling, (and treatment if necessary) at this facility or via their own health care provider if they prefer. The college will only reimburse expenses incurred with a referral from a faculty member to Mercy Work, Health, and Safety. Once referred, all interaction with Mercy Work, Health, and Safety or any other health care provider is strictly confidential. The dental hygiene program neither receives nor requests information about any worker.

(b) Students, faculty and appropriate staff must comply with program requirements pertaining to immunizations for hepatitis B and other communicable diseases.