

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

STATEMENT ON LEARNER ILLNESS, EXPOSURE AND PATIENT SAFETY IN CLINICAL LEARNING

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PURPOSE

The Doctor of Medicine (“MD Program”) or Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry (“School”) at Western University is committed to the principle of a safe environment for learning, patient care and research.

This statement outlines expectations for all program learning when medical students (“Learners”) develop an illness that may impact patient care or safety or are exposed to an environmental hazard. This Statement will apply to all Learners in School clinical learning. This statement does not deal with Learners and blood borne viruses (BBV) which are detailed in the MD Program [Blood Borne Viruses](#).

This statement outlines the process of prevention, notice, intervention and accommodation for Learner illness or exposure to infection and/or environmental hazards in all program learning.

DEFINITIONS

Affiliates: hospitals, clinics or treatment facilities for student clinical learning

Exposure: An experience where a medical student in clinical learning is exposed to an infectious agent or environmental hazard

Learner: A medical student registered for clinical learning through the UME Program as a Western student or visiting student registered through the AFMC Student Portal

STATEMENT

The MD Program and Affiliates deliver medical education learning which includes clinical care and research. With this comes acknowledgement that Learners may be exposed to an infectious agent and/or environmental hazard, and may become ill as a result of this exposure. Learners may be excluded from clinical care that may involve exposure to serious life-threatening infectious agents (e.g. Ebola) and/or environmental hazards.

Learner absence due to illness and/or disability that results from exposure to an infection and/or environmental hazard will be accommodated, as per MD Program processes outlined in this document. This will apply to Program clinical and educational experience necessary to complete the required learning outcomes/objectives, Entrustable Professional Activities or other such requirements to satisfactorily achieve the MD Program graduation competencies.

Education and communication of risk of exposure to infectious agent, developing a health issue impacting patients and/or environmental hazard to learners:

- Learners are required to complete, in advance of starting a learning experience, all Affiliate and/or MD Program modules mandated by legislation and institutional policies. These typically will deal with workplace safety, transmissible diseases and environmental hazards. The MD Program or Affiliate will communicate to the Learner the requirement to complete these modules.
- Learners will comply with the notification processes defined by the Affiliates for exposure to illnesses and environmental hazards.
- The MD Program will provide curricular time for Learner education and training in advance of starting the Year 3 course “*Clerkship*” on workplace exposure to infectious agents and environmental hazards and prevention of subsequent disease.
- Learners will receive counselling and referral to appropriate health professionals through the Learner Experience Office (LEO) if exposed to an infectious agent and at risk of developing a health issue that impacts patient care and/or environmental hazard.

Notification of risk of exposure to infectious agent and/or environmental hazard impacting clinical education.

The Program, Affiliates or School will:

- Notify learners electronically through the MD Program in collaboration with the Affiliate when there is a serious infectious disease outbreak that may result in suspension of clinical learning (e.g. SARS-COV2, Ebola).
- Comply with the COFM [COFM Immunization and Screening Policy](#) and [Blood Borne Viruses Policy](#).
- Grant an immediate medical leave of absence to the Learner who develops a personal health issue impacting patient care or safety
- Support Learners utilizing the Learner Experience Office (LEO), Western University, School and MD Program resources if exposed to an infectious agent resulting in a health issue impacting patient care and/or environmental hazard.

The Learner will:

- Take an immediate leave if they are aware of a personal health issue that may or has an impact on the learning environment, wellness or safety of others and/or safe patient care.
- Inform the LEO and their MD Program course supervisor immediately if ill and absent due to risk of impacting safety of any patient, peer and/or other health professional secondary to personal illness and/or disability from exposure to an infectious agent and/or environmental hazard.
- Disclose to their supervisor if they have accidentally exposed patients to a personal infectious illness in a clinical setting.
- Have their condition reviewed and monitored by a physician (if necessary) after exposure.
- Submit documentation (if requested) to the LEO to clarify their health status and to develop an accommodated learning plan as per the [Schulich MD Program Blood Borne Virus Policy](#).
- Comply with an accommodated learning plan, as developed by the course faculty lead for the required clinical learning experience after return to studies.
- Assume financial responsibility of exposure to infectious agents and/or environmental hazards by participating in the Western University student ancillary fees and registering all clinical learning with the Program to qualify for financial compensation by the Workplace Compensation Board of Ontario.

Accommodation for student health issues and/or environmental hazard exposure impacting safety of others in the learning environment and/or safe patient care

The School and Program will:

- Grant a medical Leave of Absence to a Learner with a personal health issue impacting the learning environment, wellness or safety of others and/or safe patient care.
- Maintain confidentiality to the greatest extent possible regarding any information disclosed by or about Learners with illness and/or disability from exposure to an infectious agent and/or environmental hazard.
- Create an accommodated learning plan in accordance with MD Program policy, for a Learner who cannot complete required clinical learning due to illness and/or disability from exposure to an infectious agent and/or environmental hazard.
- Advise the Learner's supervising physicians of the accommodations required for the Learner.
- Provide the accommodated learning plan to the Learner's supervisor and educate the supervisor (if necessary) so that they understand the plan and how it should be implemented.
- Provide, in collaboration with the Affiliate, all support for clinical instructors in meeting a Learner's accommodated learning plan.
- Monitor Learner compliance with all accommodated learning plans.
- Request withdrawal from studies for Learners as per the [Statement on Professionalism](#) for actions that breach the safety of the learning environment, wellness or safety of others and/or safe patient care if recommended by the Vice Dean, UME.
- Allow for appeal of decisions of accommodation or withdrawal in accordance with the [Assessment and Appeals Policy](#).