

BTC DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM BLOODBORNE PATHOGEN POLICY

The Dental Hygiene Program at Bellingham Technical College (BTC) is committed to addressing issues related to bloodborne pathogens, such as Human Immunodeficiency (HIV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) to protect patients, students, faculty and staff, as well as protect the rights of individuals who may have a bloodborne infectious disease.

Students are required to treat all assigned patients; therefore, the potential exists for transmission of bloodborne and other infectious diseases during patient care services. The purpose of this Bloodborne Pathogen Policy (BPP) is to minimize the risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens and to minimize the risk to environmental hazards.

Admission/Employment

The BTC Dental Hygiene Program will not discriminate against employees, students, applicants for admission or patients based solely on health status. Applicants who test positive for infectious disease or who are carriers of an infectious disease should seek counsel from their physician and the program director prior to application.

Immunizations

The risk for exposure to Hepatitis B is higher for Dental Health Care Providers (DHCP) than the general population; therefore, it is recommended that students start the vaccination process for Hepatitis B as soon as they receive acceptance into the program. A comprehensive medical history, physical examination, negative Tuberculin (Mantoux) skin test (negative chest x-ray if positive or contraindicated) and immunizations are additional requirements for dental hygiene students.

HIV testing

Testing for HIV for dental health care providers (DHCP) and students is not required by the Dental Hygiene Program. However, health care workers and students who perform exposure-prone procedures on patients are encouraged to be tested voluntarily in order to know their HIV status.

Obligation to report

A student will be allowed to continue his/her education as long as the medical condition permits patient care and other individual's health are not jeopardized or at risk. In the event that an individual poses a risk to others, the Dental Hygiene Program Director will assist the individual in obtaining counseling and advisement regarding their health and education.

Confidentiality

All information regarding the health status of an individual is confidential and protected by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1994 and the 1996 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act . A copy of the Notice of Privacy Practices is available on the BTC website and in the clinic.

Bloodborne Pathogen & Infection Control Training

The dental hygiene program complies with all local, state and federal infection control policies including the application of Standard Precautions as stipulated by current CDC Guidelines. Written policies and instruction on infection control protocol to minimize the risk of disease transmission is provided in courses throughout the curriculum, at yearly required bloodborne pathogen training sessions and through documents such as

the Dental Hygiene Clinic Manual. Compliance of safety practices is evaluated throughout the students' clinical experience to ensure a safe educational and work environment.

Limitation of Activity

The Dental Hygiene Program will follow CDC suggested work restrictions for health-care personnel infected with or exposed to major infectious diseases in the dental hygiene clinic.

Enforcement of Practice Limitations or Modifications

Any student or DHCP who engages in unsafe and/or careless clinical practices that create risk to the health of patients, employees, or students shall be subject to disciplinary action. When such actions are brought to the attention of the Program Director, the student or DHCP may be suspended immediately from all patient care activities pending a full investigation of the matter.

Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens

DHCP or students who are exposed to a bloodborne pathogen in the course of their clinical care are expected to follow the procedures set forth in the Clinic Manual. If a student should be exposed to a patient's body fluids in a manner that may transmit a bloodborne or infectious disease, the student and patient will be asked to be tested for disease.

Environmental Hazards

Environmental hazards of dental hygiene practice include: disorders associated with repetitive activities, exposure to high decibel sounds, exposure to hazardous chemicals or substances, accidental injury, exposure to radiation and allergic reactions to latex or other chemical agents.

Communication of Bloodborne Pathogen Policy to Dental Hygiene Clinic Patients

Patients of the Dental Hygiene Clinic are informed of bloodborne pathogen policies at their initial appointments in the clinic. Patients are asked to read the Clinic Brochure which includes the "Patient Responsibilities" and "Your rights as a Patient". The BTC Bloodborne Pathogens Policy is available upon request in the dental hygiene clinic.

Effective date: 6/5/2009

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