	<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b> <b>Department of Physician Assistant</b>	<i>Policy Number</i>	PHAS - 008
		<i>Effective Date</i>	08/01/2022
Howard University College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences	<b>Student Exposure Policy (Occupational Exposure) – A3.08</b>		

Table of Contents	Page Number
I. PURPOSE	1
II. POLICY	1
III. DEFINITIONS	1
IV. PROCEDURES	1 - 6

### **I. PURPOSE**

To establish the process for student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards.

### **II. POLICY**

It is the practice and procedure of the Howard University Physician Assistant Department to implement measures to ensure student safety regardless of setting. The program has adopted the institution policy for student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards. The goals of the occupational exposure plan are to:

1. To prevent work-related injury and illness of Howard University medical, dental, nursing, and allied health students.
2. To prevent spread of communicable diseases to patients treated by Howard University clinical students.
3. To formalize procedures for reporting and managing work-related injuries and illness of Howard University clinical students.


### **III. DEFINITIONS**

N/A

### **IV. PROCEDURES**

#### **A. Health Education**

- Education: New students will be given a copy of the occupational exposure plan during orientation. Prior to their first patient encounter, they will be educated in universal precautions and isolation requirements.
- Health Screening and Maintenance: The Howard University Student Health Center will monitor the health status of all medical, dental, and allied health science students with potentially infectious conditions as well as students who are injured or exposed to an infectious hazard as a

	<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b> <b>Department of Physician Assistant</b>	<i>Policy Number</i>	PHAS - 008
		<i>Effective Date</i>	08/01/2022
<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b>	<b>Student Exposure Policy (Occupational Exposure) – A3.08</b>		


result of their assigned clinical activities. This will be accomplished through primary prevention screening and post-exposure or post-injury diagnostic testing and treatment. The Howard University Hospital Employee Health Unit requires documentation of health screening and treatment of active disease prior to the time the student presents for Howard University Hospital, and all other hospitals, clinics or physician offices to students are assigned reserve the right to refuse access to their facilities to any student who fails to comply with the occupational exposure plan.

**B. Health Screening**

- Screening for infections is accomplished prior to matriculation, prior to the student's first patient encounter, and annually thereafter. The following are required of clinical students involved in direct patient care:
  - Initial physical examination and annually thereafter.
  - Initial tuberculosis screening and annually thereafter.
  - Initial testing for syphilis serology.
  - Proof of immunity to measles, mumps, and rubella, as evidenced by two MMR vaccinations, or immune titers.
  - Tetanus (Td) within the past 10 years.
  - Immunity to Hepatitis B evidenced by three Hepatitis B vaccinations or immune titers.
  - Immunity to varicella (chicken pox).
  - COVID-19 vaccine\*
  - Additional requirements may be required if rotating through pediatrics (such as nasopharyngeal cultures, etc.)

Students will not be allowed to begin clinical assignment until cleared by the Student Health Center. Any student having an active infectious disease must be treated by his/her private physician prior to beginning or continuing a clinical assignment. A physician's "return to duty" certificate is required by the University Student Health Center as well as by the program clinical education coordinator before resuming clinical activity.

\*Howard University will require all students who are in person to be fully vaccinated (two or more weeks have passed since receipt of the second dose in a two-dose series or since receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine) against

	<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b> <b>Department of Physician Assistant</b>	<i>Policy Number</i>	PHAS - 008
		<i>Effective Date</i>	08/01/2022
<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b>	<b>Student Exposure Policy (Occupational Exposure) – A3.08</b>		

COVID-19 prior to being on campus. This policy went into effect on August 1, 2021. There is only one exception for students to come to campus if they have not been fully vaccinated, and that is to receive a vaccine.

- Please note that while students with approved medical or religious exemptions for the COVID vaccination requirement will be allowed to attend classes on campus (following appropriate safety protocols), they will **NOT** be permitted to live in on-campus housing.

[COVID Vaccine Policy Statement for Students at Howard | Howard University](#)

### C. Students with Active Disease (Not Work-Related)

#### 1. Colds and Coughs

A student with cold symptoms (i.e., runny nose, nasal congestion, watery eyes), without constitutional symptoms, may begin or continue his/her clinical assignment unless coughing repeatedly with a temperature of 100 degrees F or more. Exception: students with viral infections or cold symptoms who work with children, immune suppressed patients, and renal transplant patients will be sent home.

#### - Respiratory hygiene/Cough etiquette


- Cover mouth/nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Use and dispose of tissues.
- Perform hand hygiene after hands have been in contact with respiratory secretions.
- Consider using a mask to prevent aerosol spread. Consult with your clinical preceptor regarding specific clinical policy on when masks must be used.
- Sit as far away from others as possible when ill with respiratory symptoms.

#### 2. Diarrhea

Students with diarrhea suspected to be viral or bacterial in origin will not be allowed to work in the nutrition and food service department or nursing services until the condition is controlled. Rectal swab or stool specimen and follow-up are advised.

#### 3. Herpes

Students with open herpetic lesions will be relieved from direct patient contact until the lesions are dried and healed.

	<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b> <b>Department of Physician Assistant</b>	<i>Policy Number</i>	PHAS - 008
		<i>Effective Date</i>	08/01/2022
<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b>	<b>Student Exposure Policy (Occupational Exposure) – A3.08</b>		

#### 4. Communicable Disease

Students with a communicable disease (or who have a family member with a communicable disease) should follow the guidelines found in "Guidelines for Students with or Exposed to Communicable Diseases."

#### D. Evaluation of Occupational Exposure, Illness, and Injury


Students who are exposed to blood or bodily fluids, become ill or injured as the result of a clinical assignment will be evaluated at the Howard University Student Health Center during the Center's normal operating hours. Students will be treated at the Howard University Hospital Employee Health Center after obtaining a referral and claim form from the Student Health Center. If the Employee Health Unit is closed, the student will be referred to the Howard University Hospital Emergency Department. The Student Health Center staff member will triage the student and write the following information on the referral form:

- Whether the student has had his/her series of Hepatitis B and tetanus vaccines, and any other laboratory information.
- The type of injury, when and how the injury occurred, and any pertinent information regarding the patient.

When the Student Health Center is closed or in cases of dire emergency, the student should first contact the designated administrator at the work site and program clinical education coordinator. Any necessary emergency medical care shall be made available to the student through the regular procedures in effect at the Employee Health Unit or Emergency Department of the hospital, clinic, or other medical facility to which the student is assigned. The morning following discharge, the student must report to the Student Health Center for evaluation and clearance to return to the clinical site. The student should bring copies of discharge instructions and any other information describing the treatment that was rendered. The student will be referred to the Howard University Hospital Employee Health Unit or primary care provider for further management of the condition, if deemed medically necessary by the Student Health Center.


#### E. Standard/Universal Precautions

Standard/Universal precautions are the minimum safety and infection prevention practices that apply to **all** patient care, laboratory, or technical skills training experiences in any setting where healthcare or healthcare training is delivered. These practices are designed to protect healthcare professionals (HCP) and prevent the spread of infections to others. Students will receive training on standard/universal precautions, and occupational

	<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b> <b>Department of Physician Assistant</b>	<i>Policy Number</i>	PHAS - 008
		<i>Effective Date</i>	08/01/2022
<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b>	<b>Student Exposure Policy (Occupational Exposure) – A3.08</b>		

during the didactic and clinical phases of the program. The training will comprise of online OSHA seminars.

- **Hand hygiene** is critical to reduce the risk of spreading infection. Current CDC guidelines recommend use of alcohol-based hand rub for hand hygiene except when hands are visibly soiled (e.g., dirt, blood, body fluids), or after caring for patients with known or suspected infectious diarrhea, in which cases soap and water should be used.
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**
  - **Gloves** will be worn when there is risk of contact with or when handling blood, body fluid, tissues, or contaminated surfaces or equipment.
  - **Gowns** or plastic aprons will be worn if blood splattering is likely.
  - **Facial masks and/or protective eye wear** will be worn when performing/assisting procedures with a risk of body fluid or other hazardous material splashes or sprays. (e.g., when suctioning a patient with copious secretions).
- **Saliva** has not been implicated in HIV transmission; however, emergency mouth-to-mouth resuscitation should be minimized by using mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, or other ventilation devices accessible and available for use in areas where the need for resuscitation is predictable.
- **Sharp objects** should be handled in such a manner to prevent accidental cuts or punctures. Used needles should not be bent, broken, reinserted (recapped) into their original sheath, or unnecessarily handled. They should be discarded intact immediately after use into an impervious needle disposable box.
- All **needle stick accidents, mucosal splashes, or contamination of open wounds** with blood or body fluids should be reported immediately to the Student Health Service and Clinical Education Coordinator. If the Student Health Service is closed, please report to the Howard University Emergency Department for treatment. Students are required to complete a **Student Incident/Injury Report** form.

	<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b> <b>Department of Physician Assistant</b>	<i>Policy Number</i>	PHAS - 008
		<i>Effective Date</i>	08/01/2022
<b>Howard University</b> <b>College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences</b>	<b>Student Exposure Policy (Occupational Exposure) – A3.08</b>		

- **Blood spills** should be cleaned up promptly with a disinfectant solution such as 1:10 dilution of bleach, Sanimaster, phenol or alcohol.
- **Safe handling of potentially contaminated surfaces or equipment:**
  - Environmental cleaning: Areas in which patient care activities are performed will be routinely cleaned and disinfected at the conclusion of the activity as outlined by the laboratory course director/instructor.
  - Medical equipment safety. Reusable medical equipment must be cleaned and disinfected (or sterilized) according to the manufacturer’s instructions. If the manufacturer does not provide guidelines for this process the device may not be suitable for multi-patient use.

*Compliance with all safety practices is not just a good procedure - it is a mark of your professionalism. **Persistent failure to observe and practice Standard Precautions may result in adverse/disciplinary action for unprofessional behavior.***

## **F. Financial Responsibility**

Insurance coverage at Howard University is mandatory for all students and will begin on August 1st for fall registration and January 1st for spring registration. The health insurance fee is included in the University matriculation fee and coverage is provided by United Healthcare Student Resources. This fee cannot be waived.

Student must be seen by the Student Health Center prior to receiving specialty referral services. Expenses will incur for medical treatment rendered outside of the Student Health Center for which no prior approval or referral is obtained.

Exceptions to this rule are:

- Services provided by OB/GYN and Mental Health for which no referral is needed.
- Referrals are also not needed when you are more than 35 miles from campus or when the Student Health Center is closed (breaks or holidays).
- All mental health services (including prescribing of medication for ADD/ADHD) are provided at the University Counseling Center location on campus.