

JAMES A. RHODES STATE COLLEGE  
HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY STATEMENT

This policy and/or procedure provides operating principles for Human Resources issues at James A. Rhodes State College. It supersedes any prior policy covering the specific subject. This policy and/or procedure may be suspended, modified or cancelled as determined by the College. This policy and/or procedure does not create a contract of employment, nor is it a condition of employment between the College and its employees.

This policy and/or procedure is provided on-line for the convenience of access for College employees. The original policy will be the governing copy and is on file in Human Resources.

(Specific Policy Follows on Next Page)

## INFECTIOUS DISEASE POLICY

Policy 5.12  
BOT 4-16-96

Applies to: All Faculty, Staff and Students

### A. Policy Guidelines

James A. Rhodes State College is committed to protecting students, faculty, staff, and patients (in the dental hygiene clinic and clinical affiliates) from exposure to blood-borne and other infectious diseases. In March, 1995, the Health Technologies Division issued an "HIV and Hepatitis B Policy" designed to protect patients treated in the numerous clinical facilities. This Infectious Disease Policy demonstrates the college's commitment to protecting the rights of all members of the College community; to educating faculty, staff and students about infectious diseases, including HIV, AIDS, TB, and Hepatitis B; to providing a humane response to those infected with the HIV virus; and to taking every reasonable precaution to provide a safe educational and work environment.

Under federal and state law (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Section 4112 of the Ohio Revised Code), the College as an employer and a provider of education services, must make reasonable accommodations for disabled individuals, including those with infectious diseases. Therefore, infectious diseases will not cause students, employees, or patients to be excluded from the workplace or the educational environment provided they behave responsibly. This includes managing their medical conditions and avoiding behavior that causes a health risk to themselves and others.

All new entering health division students and new college employees in the health division will be informed, in writing, of the risks of bloodborne and other infectious diseases. They will be encouraged to carefully consider their individual situation and consult a counselor privately. Students and college employees with a high risk of infectious diseases should be aware of their own health status and risks of exposure.

### B. Definitions and Terminology

This document refers to several terms defined by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (MMWR, 1987;36) which follow:

Health Care Workers (HCWs): includes faculty, staff, and students whose activities involve physical contact with patients or with blood or other body fluids from patients in the health-care setting.

Exposure: refers to percutaneous, mucosal, or surgical exposure to the blood or internal body fluids of a patient or HCW. Exposure is not synonymous with transmission of an infectious agent.

Invasive Procedure: a surgical entry into tissues, cavities, or organs or repair of major traumatic injuries associated with any of the following: 1) an operating or delivery room, emergency department, or outpatient setting, including both physicians' and dentists' offices; 2) cardiac catheterization and angiographic procedures; 3) a vaginal or cesarean delivery or other invasive obstetric procedure during which bleeding may occur; or 4) the manipulation, cutting or removal of any oral or perioral tissues, including tooth structure, during which bleeding occurs or the potential for bleeding exists.

Exposure-Prone Procedures: The CDC has indicated that certain invasive surgical and dental procedures that have been implicated in the transmission of hepatitis B virus from infected-HCWs

to patients, despite adherence to the principles of universal precautions, should be considered exposure-prone. The CDC has also stated that "characteristics of exposure-prone procedures include digital palpation of a needle tip in a body cavity or the simultaneous presence of the HCWs fingers and a needle or other sharp instruments or objects in a poorly visualized or highly confined anatomic site." CDC is working with national professional organizations to develop a list of exposure-prone procedures.

#### C. HIV Testing and Confidentiality

1. Routine or mandatory HIV testing of all HCWs, or even specific categories of HCWs is not recommended, nor should it be a requirement for college admissions, employment, credentialing, licensure, or insurance.
2. All HCWs are encouraged to undergo personal assessments to determine their need for HIV testing. Testing must be on a voluntary basis. These assessments should include known high-risk behaviors as well as risks associated with health care-related occupational exposure. If they are at risk, HCWs should learn their HIV status to protect and improve their health and to receive appropriate counseling.
3. It is expected that all health division students and employees will be bound to the principle of strict confidentiality in all patient and health care related activities.
4. When exposures to blood and other body fluids occur between HCWs and patients, counseling and written informed consent should always be requested prior to testing. A HCW who exposes a patient to his/her blood/body fluid is ethically bound to inform the patient of this exposure and to undergo testing as appropriate. (refer to Management of Persons Exposed to Blood) In this case, the patient has the right to know the infectious status of the HCW to assist him/her in making decisions regarding appropriate prophylaxis and follow-up care.

#### D. Immunizations for Health Care Workers/Health Screenings

##### 1. Immunizations

In compliance with the Ohio State Dental Board, all dental hygiene students and faculty are required to document proof of immunization or immunity to HBV; all other health division faculty, students and exposure-prone staff are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated for HBV prior to contact with blood or other potential bloodborne pathogens. If after consultation, a student, faculty or staff member decides not to obtain HBV vaccination, a waiver must be signed. HCWs with high risk of infectious diseases should become knowledgeable concerning their own status.

##### 2. Health Screenings

New health division students are required to submit written evidence to document immunization for measles, mumps, rubella, and a negative TB test. A tuberculosis-free chest radiograph or documented history of tuberculosis treatment is required for a skin test positive individual. In subsequent years, a negative annual TB skin test is required. (refer to Health Division Program Physical Examination)

All other health division faculty and exposure-prone staff are required to document evidence

of immunization for measles, mumps and rubella and a negative TB test. This evidence should comply with appropriate clinical site requirements. A tuberculosis-free chest radiograph or documented history of tuberculosis treatment is required for a skin test positive individual. In subsequent years, a negative annual TB skin test is required.

3. Universal Precautions

Health care workers must strictly adhere to universal precautions including the appropriate use of hand washing, protective barriers, and care in the use and disposal of needles and other sharp instruments. In certain cases, gowns, and protective eyewear will be required to prevent the transmission of bloodborne infections. Any occupational exposure must be reported to an appropriate college representative and an incident report filed as soon as reasonably possible.

Health care workers who have exudative lesions or weeping dermatitis of the hands, forearms, or other locations should refrain from performing all invasive or exposure-prone procedures. They should also avoid handling patient-care equipment and devices used in performing invasive or exposure-prone procedures until the condition resolves.

4. Education

The education of HCWs regarding proper infection control procedures begins early in the educational process and includes training regarding universal precautions, use of barrier techniques, and other scientifically accepted infection control practices. Continuing information will be available to HCWs about the transmissibility of disease(s) and precautions that may be taken by infected persons to prevent the spread of disease. The importance of continued education in infectious disease control will be emphasized.

This policy, the HIV and HBV Policy, as well as program-specific infection control policies will be available to all new HCWs.

E. Guidance for Infected Health Care Workers

1. All infected health care workers (students and faculty) are encouraged to seek counseling from their personal physician, as needed, to better understand the prevention of disease transmission and to receive advice on appropriate special precautions. In addition, HCWs with any infectious process:
  - a) should seek appropriate medical care and periodic evaluation of health status, counseling on the advisability of continuing to work in the health care setting, and information on hygiene, safer sex, and partner notification; and
  - b) must inform the chairperson of the HCWs health program when there is significant risk of compromised patient care. Decision regarding modification of the education program and future patient care activity will be made on a case-by-case basis as determined by the College Expert Panel\*. The nature of the laboratory or clinical activity, the technical competency of the individual, and the functional disabilities or limitations of the individual will be taken into consideration. The HCW will remain anonymous to the panel except for their status and responsibilities. The panel will evaluate this information and recommendation of the infected HCW's personal physician and concur or make additional recommendations regarding patient care.

Based upon these recommendations, the specific health chairperson will determine the scope of the faculty or student's activities. Decisions of this chairperson can be appealed to the President whose decision is final.

\*The College Expert Panel consists of:

- Infection Control Specialist or epidemiologist
- Allen County Health Commissioner
- College Legal Counsel
- Vice President for Instruction
- Dental Hygiene Program Chairperson or other health program chairperson

2. All infected HCWs who perform invasive or exposure-prone procedures should practice only after an evaluation by their personal physician. The evaluation of their personal physician will be reviewed by the expert panel as noted above.
3. HCWs who modify their practices because of infection should, whenever possible, be provided opportunities to continue appropriate patient-care activities.

F. Notification of Health Care Workers' HIV Status

The public health benefit of notification of patients treated by an infected HCW has not been documented. When an infected HCW's status becomes known, any notification of patients should be considered on a case-by-case basis by the College Expert Panel. Any decision to notify patients should be made in consultation with local and state public health officials and the infected HCW, if available.

