

# SUNY DOWNSTATE MEDICAL CENTER

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**Department:** College of Medicine

**Subject:** Medical Student Exposure to Extraordinary Infectious or Environmental Hazards Policy

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**Approved by:** Dean's Council for Education

**Distribution:** X Office of Medical Education  
X Student Affairs  
X Student Health Services  
 Dean's Council

**Review Date:** July 2019

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**Purpose:** LCME standard MS-30 states that each school must have policies addressing student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards. The purpose of this policy is to promote student health and safety during periods when extraordinary outbreaks of infectious disease or environmental hazards may affect the undergraduate medical education program. This policy specifically includes epidemics, pandemics or extraordinary environmental hazards that potentially threaten the health and safety of undergraduate medical students. It does not include infectious or environmental exposure encountered in normal clinical activities. The latter policy regarding the effects of infectious diseases is also included in the Student Handbook.

### **Policy:**

1. The Vice Dean for Education, in Medical Education in consultation with the Associate Deans for Foundations and Clinical Medicine will determine the extent of undergraduate medical student participation in academic and clinical activities when potential exposure to infectious or environmental hazards substantially exceeds expected standards. This may involve individual or small groups of students with potential exposure to a specific high risk environment or widespread occurrences such as epidemics or pandemics.
2. The decision of the Vice Dean for Education will be based on the following principles:
  - a. While such situations may provide a unique learning experience the potential educational benefits must be weighed against student health and safety concerns, public health concerns and the objectives of the undergraduate medical education program. The first priority for undergraduate medical students will be their health and safety.
  - b. Students are in an educational role and should not be involved in clinical activities that go beyond the roles performed in the normal clinical environment. Students may participate in clinical activities during periods of significant risk according to the level of clinical competence of the student and the assessment of risk of the clinical environment.
  - c. Academic education activities should continue wherever possible regardless of the cancellation of clinical education activities.
  - d. Undergraduate medical students are not permitted to volunteer for involvement in clinical activities during situations subject to this policy without the approval of the Vice Dean for Education.
  - e. As a matter of general course, all students will:
    - Have their immunization record reviewed annually and updated as needed through the Student Health Service
    - Be mask-fitted in second year through the Student Health Service and be fit tested again during each annual health assessment

- Be schooled in the concept of universal precautions and techniques for infection control before exposure to clinical activities

3. It is the responsibility of faculty members, staff and students to notify the Vice Dean for Education in a timely manner of the existence of any hazardous environment that might affect undergraduate medical students.

4. Any decisions made under this policy will be communicated promptly to students, faculty, and healthcare organizations affected by the decision.

5. The procedures for care and treatment of students after occupational exposure, and any secondary disability, would be addressed through Student Health Services at Downstate Medical Center.

### **Definitions**

Epidemic: epidemic is a classification of a disease that appears as new cases in a given human population, during a given period, at a rate that substantially exceeds what is "expected," based on recent experience

Pandemic: pandemic is an epidemic that spreads through human populations across a large region (for example a continent), or even worldwide.

Environmental Hazards: "Environmental hazard" is a generic term for any situation or state of events which poses a threat to people in the surrounding environment.