**WESTERN KENTUCKY PROGRAM OF DENTAL HYGIENE**

**BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS POLICY**

The Dental Hygiene Program at Western Kentucky University is committed to addressing issues related to bloodborne pathogens, such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (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 the Bloodborne Pathogen Policy (BPP) and Exposure Control Plan (ECP) is to minimize the risk of transmission of bloodborne pathogens and to minimize the risk to environmental hazards. Policies will be reviewed annually, or as necessary, as new information may become available. This policy is provided to faculty, staff, and students upon entry to the program, posted on the program website and is available to others upon request.

**Admission/Employment**

The Dental Hygiene Program at Western Kentucky University will not discriminate against employees, students, and 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. If a vaccination series for Hepatitis B has been completed in the past, a Hepatitis B titer must be completed showing immunity. The completion of a comprehensive medical history, physical examination, negative Tuberculin (TB) skin test (negative chest x-ray if positive or contraindicated), MMR vaccination, and Tdap are requirements of the Program.

**HIV Testing**

Testing of WKUDH personnel and students for HIV is not required. 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 Infectious Status**

Any student or employee who knows, or has reasonable basis for believing that he or she is infected with HIV/AIDS, HBV or other infectious disease which may pose a threat to others, and whose curriculum or job requires performance of patient care procedures which may prove exposed, has an obligation to share that information. Disclosure will allow the College to protect the welfare of employees, students and patients/clients from the spread of disease, and we can also respond appropriately to the individuals’ health and employment/educational needs.

A student will be allowed to continue his/her education as long as their 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. All information regarding the health status is confidential and is considered protected health information. The program requires all faculty, staff and students to maintain strict confidentiality of a patient’s bloodborne pathogen status and all medical conditions.

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

**Limitation of Activity**

The WKU Program of Dental Hygiene will follow CDC suggested work restrictions for health-care personnel infected with or exposed to major infectious diseases in the dental hygiene clinic. A copy of work restriction recommendations is found within the Exposure Control Plan.

**Enforcement of Practice Limitations or Modifications**

Any student or DHCP who engages in unsafe and/or careless clinical practices, which create risks 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 students 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 Exposure Control Plan. If a student should be exposed to a patient’s body fluids in a manner that may transmit a bloodborne or infectious disease, the 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. The school’s Bloodborne Pathogens Policy and Exposure Control Plan are available upon request in the dental hygiene clinic.