

Board Policy 2.4: SERIOUS INFECTIOUS ILLNESS

Adopted 12/14/93

Revised 11/8/05(RF)

The Board of Trustees of Eastern Wyoming College is responsible for overall development, implementation and maintenance of college-wide policy on serious infectious illnesses as they affect **the safety and work areas of** College employees and students.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of this policy, with appropriate input and participation of technical experts, including but not limited to safety, confidentiality, employment, testing, education, benefits, etc.

The purpose of this policy is to inform employees of **serious infectious illness**, including but not limited to Tuberculosis, **all Hepatitis forms**, SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), bloodborne diseases such as all Hepatitis forms and HIV infection, and how this organization is responding to these health issues.

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Administrative Rule 2.4.1: SERIOUS INFECTIOUS ILLNESS

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The following Administrative Rule has been developed to implement the Infectious Illness Policy.

1. Workplace Safety
 - a. Eastern Wyoming College as an employer shall provide a safe work environment for all employees based on standards set by OSHA and the State Department of Health.
 - b. The College shall make first aid kits readily available in work areas. Infection control procedures shall be posted near first aid kits, restrooms and rest areas.
 - c. The College shall provide a source of water, soap, disinfectant solution, and disposable paper towels close to the workplace.
 - d. Blood spill decontamination kits will be readily available in areas identified as having a high risk of blood spills. These areas include but are not limited to Health Services, Maintenance and Custodial Services, Fitness Center, Gymnasium, CTEC Building, ATEC Building, and Vet Tech building.
 - e. Employees who knowingly disregard infection control procedures may be counseled and/or disciplined accordingly.

2. Education

It is the policy of Eastern Wyoming College to provide information and education to its employees regarding serious infectious illness that covers:

- a. Rights in gaining employment, continuing employment and conditions of employment of persons diagnosed as having a serious infectious illness;
- b. Rights and responsibilities of the College as an employer to make reasonable accommodations in the workplace for employees and applicants diagnosed as having a serious infectious illness;
- c. Rights and responsibilities of the College as an employer to maintain the confidentiality of any medical information regarding an employee or prospective employee;
- d. Safety and/or perceived safety of the workplace for co-workers of and employees diagnosed as having a serious infectious illness;
- e. Concerns of applicants/employees regarding their insurability and/or continued insurability as a result of being diagnosed as having a serious infectious illness;
- f. Information and Training: Employees must be provided with information and training in areas including:
 - The Bloodborne Pathogens Standard itself.
 - The epidemiology and symptoms of serious infectious illness and bloodborne diseases.
 - Transmission of serious infectious illness and bloodborne diseases.
 - The College's Exposure Control Plan.
 - An explanation of how to recognize tasks that may involve exposure.
 - A review of methods that will prevent or reduce exposure (Universal Precautions).
 - How to select and use personal protective equipment.
 - The use of biohazard labels, signs and container "color-coding".
 - Information on **all Hepatitis forms** vaccine and the College's policy on providing the vaccine for employees identified as "at risk".
 - Actions to take in case of emergencies involving serious infectious illness and bloodborne pathogens, including the use of Blood Spill Decontamination kits.
 - An explanation of the procedures to follow if an exposure incident occurs, including reporting and medical follow-up.
 - Information on the post-exposure evaluation and follow-up that is provided to employees in case of an exposure incident.
- g. Any other issues, concerns, rights, responsibilities and/or obligations of applicants, employees and the College as an employer as they pertain to serious infectious illness.

Current principle concerns in the workplace with respect to serious infectious illness(es) are Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19). Eastern Wyoming College believes that a compelling need exists to provide information and education about serious infectious illness(es) to its employees due to the serious nature of the diseases, the protected increasing numbers of diagnosed cases and the fear of exposure in both the workplace and elsewhere.

3. Employment of Affected Persons

It is the policy of Eastern Wyoming College to protect the rights of individuals to employment free from unlawful discrimination based on handicap. This includes employment with the College and encompasses non-discriminatory treatment of persons with impairing conditions or diseases capable of being impairing. An impairing condition or disease is one that substantially limits, or is capable of substantially limiting a major life activity. Serious infectious illnesses come within this definition.

4. Confidentiality

It is the policy of Eastern Wyoming College that rights of confidentiality of an individual's medical history and right to review medical records must be limited, but only to benefit the patients. For example, information related to a serious infectious illness test, the results of that test, or the identification of the subject of the test is confidential except as required by law or rule or as authorized by the individual who is tested. Persons who comply with these confidentiality provisions are protected from an action for civil damages.

Information of a personal nature such as, but not limited to, that kept in a personnel, medical or similar file, if public disclosure would constitute an unreasonable invasion of privacy, is exempt from disclosure. Persons seeking disclosure have the burden of showing that public disclosure would not constitute an unreasonable invasion of privacy.

Medical records of College employees are protected from disclosure. The College as an employer has a duty to protect employees with a serious infectious illness from the harassment or potentially discriminatory treatment, which may result from the information being made available. Continued employment for an employee with a serious infectious illness may sometimes be therapeutically important in the remission or recovery process or may help to prolong that employee's life. Often a breach of confidentiality may well prevent persons with a serious infectious illness from seeking medical attention or voluntarily identifying themselves to management when it seems in the best interest of the workforce to do so.

Eastern Wyoming College recognizes the serious infectious illness may pose significant and delicate issues for employees in the workplace. Accordingly, the following Guidelines should be followed:

1. Medical records of College employees are protected from public disclosure.
2. Self-disclosure or serious infectious condition is voluntary and shall not result in harassment or disparate treatment, consistent with State civil rights law.

3. Persons with serious infectious illnesses are protected as handicapped under State civil rights laws. Management or employee and who breach confidentiality or otherwise cause harassment or disparate treatment shall be disciplined as for other unacceptable practices or infractions.

5. Antibody Testing

No individual may be tested for infection without the informed consent of the individual. There shall be no routine or mandatory antibody testing of College employees.

6. Employee Benefits

The College administers benefits for employees with serious infectious disease in the same way as for employees with other life-threatening illnesses.

When employees get sick, employee health benefits are designed to provide care for them. This applies whether the disease is catastrophic, controversial, or epidemic.

All Hepatitis forms Vaccination Plan - As required by OSHA, all Hepatitis forms vaccination series shall be made available to all employees deemed "at risk" by the College. Those College employees deemed "at risk" by OSHA include employees working in Health Services. Those employees deemed "at risk" by the College include custodial and maintenance staff, coaching staff, food service, fitness center, and dorm personnel, veterinary technology, welding, refrigeration, cosmetology, and laboratory instructors. The College shall assure that employees who decline to accept all Hepatitis forms vaccination offered by the College sign a statement to this effect. If the employee initially declines Hepatitis all forms vaccination but at a later date while still covered under the standard decides to accept the vaccination, the College shall make available for all Hepatitis forms vaccination at that time. The vaccination series must be offered within 10 days of initial assignment to a job where exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials can be reasonably anticipated.

Post Exposure Evaluation and Follow-up: Following a report of an exposure incident, the College shall make immediately available to the exposed employee a confidential medical evaluation and follow-up. If the health-care professional's written opinion includes recommendation for Hepatitis all forms prophylaxis vaccination, the College shall provide this treatment. All post-exposure procedures shall adhere to OSHA rules.

No illness is excluded by Eastern Wyoming College from the College health insurance plan solely on the basis of its derivation of the human behavior.

7. Employee Refusal to Work

When the employee's refusal to work with an affected co-worker is not based upon a reasonable risk of exposure, the employee will be counseled as to current medical information. A continued unreasonable neglect of duty may be subject to disciplinary action.