

**Department of Epidemiology**  
School of Public Health and Community Medicine  
University of Washington  
**Immunization, Safety Training & Health Insurance Requirements**  
Revised 5/22/06

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

### **Overview**

Working in public health, whether in clinical, field, or laboratory settings, can entail exposure to communicable agents that pose health risks. The nature, degree, and risk of such exposure vary among our students, depending on their activities while in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine. We want to ensure that all students are aware of these risks and have appropriate health records, immunizations, and health insurance coverage, since the School does not provide this coverage.

### **Importance of Post-exposure Prophylaxis**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, post-exposure prophylaxis of blood-borne exposures may be effective in preventing sero-conversion and life-long infection. Post-exposure evaluation and prophylaxis services are available through the Hall Health Center, UWMC, and in other medical institutions throughout the region; however, the cost of evaluation, prophylaxis and follow-up is expensive, between \$1,000-3,600 per exposure, according to current estimates. In addition, medical problems resulting from exposure to infections, including HBV, HCV, and HIV sero-conversion, can result in major medical expenses over many years, ranging from thousands to hundreds of thousands of dollars over a lifetime.

### **Required Signatures:**

- **All students must read this document carefully.**
- **All students must sign and return the "Immunization and Health Insurance Status" form (last page) prior to the start of classes.**

### **Immunization Documents:**

- **Bring copies of all original immunization health records** or a list of immunizations and dates on appropriate letterhead stationary signed by a qualified health practitioner to the Hall Health Immunization Clinics explained below.

### **Measles:**

- **All students must provide proof of measles immunity to Hall Health as requested in the enrollment information from the Registration Office.**
- The Measles Immunity Verification Form is available at <http://www.hallhealthcenter.com/article-detail.asp?ArticleID=36&ClinicID=14>

- Free Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR) immunizations are offered by Hall Health at the Autumn Epidemiology Immunization Clinic or during Summer Quarter at Hall Health.

### **Other Required Immunizations:**

Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Hepatitis A (recommended, not required), Hepatitis B, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Varicella (Chicken Pox), Childhood Polio Series and annual Tuberculosis screen.

### **Immunization Review at Hall Health:**

- **Clearance by UWMC or other area hospitals is not adequate. Your immunization status must be checked by a Hall Health nurse.**
- **New Autumn Students:** Attend the Epidemiology Immunization Clinics in Health Sciences Center as announced in the “Required Orientations” flyer in the orientation materials.
  - o If you cannot attend the Autumn Quarter clinics: Make an appointment after the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of Autumn Quarter following the procedure for new summer students below.
- **New Summer Students:** Make an appointment at Hall Health during the summer.
  - o Contact [myshots@u.washington.edu](mailto:myshots@u.washington.edu) or 206-616-9074. If you have trouble reaching the Clinic, keep trying. **You cannot schedule a visit during the last two weeks of September and the first week of October.**
  - o **Hall Health Immunization Clinic Hours:** 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 1 - 4 p.m. (Thursday is not a good day unless you can have your TB test read at another clinic.)
  - o **Hall Health Location:** On upper campus, across the street and northeast of the Husky Union Building (HUB)

### **Health Fee: All students will be billed for the \$275 Health Fee.**

- Clinicians practicing at UWMC or related teaching hospitals are exempt, but still considered “fee-paid”. We cannot exempt others according to Health Sciences Administration policy. If a clinician tells Hall Health that s/he has paid the fee, the resulting confusion could result in an inadvertent bill.
- The Department will pay the fee for RA’s (but not trainees or fellows) working with biospecimens or with patients during their quarter of entry.
- The Health Fee covers all the required and recommended immunizations, titers, and chest x-ray, if necessary. It also covers Hepatitis A and Influenza vaccines.
- The Fee does not cover treatment (even if recommended by Hall Health) if a student is found to be positive for a disease, such as Hepatitis B or Tuberculosis during his/her immunization review.

- Immunizations for purposes not related to the student's program of study in Epidemiology are not included in the Health Fee.
- **Post-Exposure Prophylactic Treatment:** The Health Fee covers initial testing and prophylaxis in the event of exposure to pathogens (in particular, HIV). It does not cover treatment. This coverage applies only to exposure during assigned Epidemiology Department training activities at an assigned training site. Any expenses are billed first to the student's personal insurance.
- **Health Fee Only Covers One Degree:** If you complete your first degree and continue on to another degree, you will have to pay for updates to your immunizations and will not be covered for post-exposure prophylactic treatment via the health fee. You may elect to pay the fee again by emailing [epi@u.washington.edu](mailto:epi@u.washington.edu) before the start of your second degree or any quarter thereafter to be covered for that quarter until you complete the degree. You may have coverage for post-exposure prophylaxis and/or some immunizations through your insurance plan.

### **REQUIRED BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGEN TRAINING**

- **All MPH students and all students who will work with biospecimens or patients** as part of their Epidemiology research or coursework **must attend a Blood-borne Pathogen Workshop annually.**
- This requirement is the law.
- **You must pre-register at** <http://www.ehs.washington.edu/psotrain/corsdesc.shtm>
- If you attend blood-borne pathogen training at another local institution, such as the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, you must provide proof of attendance to the Epidemiology Program Office.

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS WORKING WITH BIOSPECIMENS/PATIENTS\*:**

- **If you will be working with biospecimens or patients as part of your research or coursework in Autumn Quarter, you must notify** [epi@u.washington.edu](mailto:epi@u.washington.edu) **prior to the start of the quarter.**
- **If you accept such a position at any point during your training, you must notify the Epi Program Office prior to beginning work.**
- **Obtain all required immunizations to be allowed to continue working with biospecimens.**
- **Hepatitis B immunization must be obtained within 10 days of starting work.**

- **You must attend Blood-borne Pathogen Course in September** (offered once/month) or prior to beginning work, if you begin work after your first Autumn Quarter.
- **You must attend the Lab Safety Seminar in September.**
- These requirements are the law.
- **You must pre-register for training** at <http://www.ehs.washington.edu/training/>.
- **Exception:** If your work with biospecimens or patients only relates to a clinical fellowship or concurrent degree, and is totally unrelated to work or study in Public Health, report your training to your supervising or concurrent degree department.

*\*DEFINITION OF WORKING WITH OR POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO BIOSPECIMENS IN A LABORATORY, FIELD OR CLINICAL SETTING*

**Any student who, as part of his/her academic program within or related to training in the School of Public Health, is exposed to human blood or body fluids through:**

- Patient or study participant contact involving performing blood drawing, injections, or possible contact with infectious body fluids, or
- Handling specimens in a laboratory or field setting

**is considered “at-risk” for blood-borne infections.** This includes laboratory coursework, research assistantships, fellowships, practica, thesis or dissertation work that involve human blood or body fluid exposures.

### **WAIVERS**

A student wishing to waive an immunization requirement may complete a waiver form at Hall Health, with a resulting “noncompliant” report to the Department. However, there are potentially significant ramifications to receiving a waiver.

**Settings with Biospecimen/Patient Exposure:** Students with incomplete immunizations (including due to receiving a waiver) or required training (as described above) will not be allowed to continue working or attending a class in settings with potential exposure to biospecimens or patients.

**Practicum Sites:** An incomplete report will significantly limit a student’s choice of practicum sites and activities. S/he must seek out a practicum site that is agreeable to his/her immunization status. If such a practicum site is identified, s/he may only participate at the practicum site if s/he provides the Epidemiology Program Office with a letter from the site on site letterhead approving the immunization waiver.

### **HEALTH INSURANCE**

It is important for students to be familiar with the benefits of their personal health insurance and to obtain insurance adequate for their situation and risks.

We strongly encourage all students to have health and disability insurance to cover basic health care costs for illness and hospitalization. While we are not in a position to offer advice on particular insurance policies or the specifics of health insurance benefits, we do want to emphasize to all students how important this decision may be.

**Insurance plans at the UW that provide post-exposure prophylaxis coverage:**

- The **Health Fee Program** pays all required immunization expenses and provides initial post-exposure prophylaxis coverage for a one-time fee of \$275 per degree. Students who complete one degree and continue on to a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree program, will have to pay the fee again to be covered.
- The **UW Student Accident and Sickness Insurance Plan currently** pays for post-exposure testing and prophylaxis (as defined by the blood-borne pathogen protocol statement in the MPH Practicum Affiliation Agreement) and Hepatitis A and B, after the deductible. Plan details are available at <http://depts.washington.edu/ovpsa/insurance.html>.
- The **Graduate Appointee Insurance Plan currently** pays for post-exposure testing and prophylaxis after the deductible. Plan details are available at <http://www.washington.edu/admin/hr/benefits/gaip/index.html>.
- **The UW Student Accident and Sickness Insurance and the Graduate Appointee Insurance Plans** above will not pay for treatment covered by Workman's Compensation. For treatments not covered by Workmen's Compensation, payments are only made after the Workman's Compensation review (see below.)

**Workman's Compensation** (also know as "L & I") pays for post-exposure prophylaxis treatment for research assistants (not for trainees or fellows) **only if the employee sero-converts**. Actual reimbursement can take months to years. It does not meet the MPH Practicum Affiliation Agreement requirements.

***IMPORTANT NOTE: Regardless of insurance status, if a student accidentally comes in contact with potentially infectious blood or body fluids, he or she should immediately (within hours, not days) seek evaluation and, if necessary, the post-exposure prophylaxis regimen to prevent sero-conversion.***

**Immunization and Health Insurance Status**  
**Department of Epidemiology**  
**School of Public Health and Community Medicine**  
**University of Washington**

(Revised 10/31/05)

Working in public health, whether in clinical, field, or laboratory settings, can entail exposure to communicable diseases. The nature, degree, and risk of exposure vary among our students depending on their activities while in the School of Public Health. We want to ensure that all students are aware of these risks and have appropriate health records, immunizations, and health insurance, since the School does not provide this coverage.

*We do not require you to have insurance. We do, however, strongly encourage you to have health and disability insurance that can cover basic health costs for illness and hospitalization, as well as the costs for testing and/or treatment needed related to risks from working within a health care environment. **The Health Fee does not cover treatment for disease even if recommended by Hall Health during immunization screening.** While we are not in a position to advise you on particular insurance policies, the specifics of health or disability insurance benefits, or how claims may be managed, we do want to be sure you understand how important this decision is.*

Please read the attached Department of Epidemiology “Immunization, Safety Training and Health Insurance Requirements” and be sure you understand them before signing below. Contact the Epidemiology Program Office if you have any questions.

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*With my signature below, I acknowledge that I have read this information and understand that coverage for health care for my family and me, and for disability is my individual responsibility.*

*I also acknowledge that I have read and understood the attached Department of Epidemiology “Immunization, Safety Training and Health Insurance Requirements”.*

*I understand that if I fail to meet the requirements I will not be allowed to participate in the MPH practicum and/or (as applicable) continue working in a laboratory or clinical setting with potential exposure to biospecimen or patients.*

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*Print Name*

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*Signature*

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*Date*

**Return this signed form to the address below, prior to beginning your studies:**

Epidemiology Program Office, Box 357236  
University of Washington  
Seattle, WA 98195  
[epi@u.washington.edu](mailto:epi@u.washington.edu)  
206-543-8226/685-1762