

Management of Health Care Workers (HCWs) and students potentially exposed to HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C

Purpose

The aim of this document is to assist Macquarie University (MQ) to manage persons following an occupational exposure to prevent disease transmission.

MQ has regard for the NSW Department of Health Policy Directive [PD2017_010 HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C – Management of Health Care Workers Potentially Exposed](#) and it should be considered in relation to the University's immunisation program.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) hepatitis B and hepatitis C may be transmitted by significant percutaneous or mucosal exposure to infective blood or other infective body substances. It involves direct contact with these substances. Such exposures may put the person at risk of acquiring a blood borne virus infection.

Note: Macquarie University has an Immunisation Program in place that addresses the requirement for **MQ Health Care Workers, including students who undertake training or field work** to have a documented assessment, screening and vaccination history.

This document addresses the NSW Department of Health Policy Directive

Foundation statements

- All patients have a right to a good standard of practice and care from Health Care Workers
- and students
- Health Care Workers and students owe a duty of care to patients and are responsible for protecting patients against infection
- Infection prevention and control practices are the primary protection for HCWs against occupational exposure to HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C
- Health Care Workers and students who are infected are entitled to confidentiality, however, in exceptional circumstances their name may be disclosed on a need to know basis (e.g. to their clinical supervisor/manager) in the interest of patient protection.
- The NSW Anti - Discrimination Act 2011 prohibits discrimination based on disability including the presence of blood borne virus (BBV)

Requirements for addressing potential blood borne virus exposures

- An efficient local reporting and management system is established
 - Report to one's manager and via the online reporting system asap
 - Follow the [post exposure action plan](#) (see appendix B) on display in clinical and lab areas
- Access to blood borne virus screening tests
 - Visit the MQ GP or your doctor of choice for assessment and further action asap
- Confidentiality regarding testing and reporting
 - Ensure that the MQ privacy program is adhered to
- All workers are aware of who to contact for advice regarding an exposure
 - MQ GP clinic (suitably experienced medical practitioner or nurse)

- MUH Immunisation Nurse
- MQ Health and Safety Advisor (Health Monitoring)
- Expert advice is available 24/7 for HCWs to enable rapid assessment* (see appendix A) and if needed timely administration of prophylaxis medication
 - MQ GP clinic is open 8am to 6pm (Mon to Fri) and 8.30am to 12.30pm (Sat)
 - The blood and body fluid exposure hotline 7am to 11pm daily at 1800 804 823 and local Emergency Department at other times

*Reference section 2 to 5 of the NSW Department of Health Policy Directive [PD2017_010 HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C – Management of Health Care Workers Potentially Exposed](#)

- An exposure deemed [notifiable by Safework NSW](#) is reported within required timeframe – <http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/media/publications/health-and-safety/when-to-notify-blood,-body-fluid-and-needlestick-exposure-incidents>
- HCWs are able to obtain support such as an employee assistance program and workers compensation:
 - Employee Assistance Program ([Benestar](#) call 1300 360 364)
 - MQ Injury Management Coordinator at via ohs@mq.edu.au

Following an occupational exposure, the affected HCW is strongly recommended to follow the advice of the suitably qualified treating medical practitioner about a medication regime and any modified activities to best protect themselves and those they come into contact with.

The advice may include the following:

- Taking anti-viral medication
- Not donating plasma, blood, body tissue, breast milk or sperm
- To protect sexual partners by adopting safe sexual practices (using a condom for example)
- To seek expert medical advice regarding pregnancy and breast feeding
- To seek medical attention about acute illness (i.e. fever, rash, myalgia, fatigue, malaise, lymphadenopathy, anorexia)

In accordance with the NSW Department of Health Policy Directive [PD2017_010 HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C – Management of Health Care Workers Potentially Exposed](#) modification to work practices (including avoidance of exposure prone procedures) are not required on the basis of an occupational exposure.

Management

In consultation and with an affected HCWs consent, the treating medical practitioner and the injury management coordinator will coordinate the management of individuals with a positive BBV result on a case by case basis.

Documentation

Some infectious diseases may take years to develop and legal issues from transmission of infection may arise after many years. Therefore, **all health care workers and students are advised to retain all immunisation and occupational incident (regarding potential exposures to BBV) records indefinitely.**