



Faculty of Medicine

Medical Student Exposure to Extraordinary Infectious or Environmental Hazards Policy

Office of Accountability:	Office of the Dean, Faculty of Medicine
Office of Administrative Responsibility:	Undergraduate Medical Education Office
Approver:	Undergraduate Medical Studies Committee
Approval Date:	September 2008

Definitions

Epidemic	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	An epidemic that spreads through human populations across a large region (for example a continent), or even worldwide.
Environmental Hazards	A generic term for any situation or state of events which poses a threat to the surrounding environment.

Overview

The Undergraduate Medical Studies (UGMS) Committee, a standing committee of Faculty Council, has responsibility for policy and procedures related to the Undergraduate Medical Education curriculum. Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (**CACMS**) **Element 12.8** states that a medical school must have policies in place that effectively address medical student exposure to infectious and environmental hazards.



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Purpose

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.

Policy

- 1.0 The Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Medical Education in consultation with the Pre-Clerkship and Clerkship Coordinators 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.
- 2.0 The decision of the Assistant Dean will be based on the following principles:
 - 2.1 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.**
 - 2.2 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.
 - 2.3 Academic education activities should continue wherever possible regardless of cancellation of clinical education activities.

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- 2.4 Undergraduate medical students are not permitted to volunteer for involvement in clinical activities during situations subject to this policy without the approval of the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Medical Education.
- 2.5 As a matter of general course, all students will:
 - 2.5.1 Have their immunization record reviewed and updated as needed in first year through the Student Health Service;
 - 2.5.2 Be mask-fitted in second year through the Student Health Service; and,
 - 2.5.3 Be schooled in the concept of universal precautions and techniques for infection control before exposure to clinical activities.
- 3.0 It is the responsibility of faculty members, staff and students to notify the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Medical Education in a timely manner of the existence of any hazardous environment that might affect undergraduate medical students.
- 4.0 Any decisions made under this policy will be communicated promptly to students, faculty, and healthcare organizations affected by the decision.
- 5.0 The procedures for care and treatment of students after occupational exposure, and any secondary disability, would be addressed through the Student Health Service of Memorial University.

Related Links

[Canadian Federation of Medical Students, An ounce of preparation: Ensuring Canadian medical student preparedness for disaster & emergency](#)



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[Memorial University of Newfoundland Emergency Management Plan](#)

[Memorial University of Newfoundland Communicable Disease Planning](#)

[Memorial University of Newfoundland Faculty of Medicine Immunization Requirements](#)

[Newfoundland & Labrador. Health and Community Services, Pandemic Influenza](#)

Eastern Health Regional All Hazards and Emergency Planning Coordinator: Telephone: 777-8248