

Communicable Disease Emergency Response and Communication Policy

Purpose

The Bryan College of Health Sciences takes its responsibility to its students, employees, and community very seriously and understands that a college environment may provide means for the spread of communicable diseases. The College has policies requiring students to obtain the pre-enrollment immunizations necessary to prevent a number of communicable diseases. While prevention is the front line defense against communicable disease, the College recognizes that immunizations are not 100% effective and many non-students, who may not be immunized, interact within the environment of the College every day. This leaves the College, and the Community it serves, vulnerable to contagion. When a known threat of communicable disease is discovered, the College must be prepared to respond quickly and effectively to minimize the impact of the threat. This policy provides the process for reporting, responding to, and communicating about instances of communicable disease.

Reporting

Employees and students of the College are expected to minimize contact with other people and contact their direct supervisor, faculty member, or clinical instructor/preceptor in the following situations (please note, the examples of diseases used in the following situations are not all inclusive):

- When they return from travel from a country the CDC has placed on a watch list for life-threatening communicable diseases such as ebola, etc.
- When they have a known exposure to a contagious or potentially life-threatening disease such as measles, pertussis, mumps, ebola, meningitis, etc.
- When they exhibit symptoms of a communicable disease such as the influenza, measles, rubella, mumps, chicken pox, pertussis, meningitis, etc.
- When they have been diagnosed with a communicable disease

The person notified by the affected student or employee will promptly notify the Dean of Students (or designee) of the situation.

Minimizing the Spread of Communicable Disease

The College will follow Bryan Medical Center policies and will collaborate with experts in epidemiology, employee/student health, and public relations available at Bryan Medical Center and the regional Public Health Department in directing the actions of employees or students and providing any further needed notifications. An individualized plan will be developed by College and Medical Center personnel delineating, at a minimum: 1) The time the employee or student must be absent from all College-related activities; and 2) The circumstances necessary for return. The goal of the plan will be allowing the individual employee or student time to recover and minimizing the probability of spreading the communicable disease to others in the College or community. Employees and students are required to follow the plan developed for their situation and failure to do so will be grounds for disciplinary action.

If a situation involves possible spread of contagion to other students or employees of the College, all possible steps will be taken to communicate with those potentially affected. An individualized plan will be created specifying: 1) Required monitoring for development of disease; and 2) Steps necessary for prevention of further spread of contagion within the internal College environment.

If an employee or student of the College reports a situation that may pose a threat of contagion to the community, College or Medical Center officials will report the actual or possible threat to city, state, and regional health officials. If it is deemed necessary for the protection of the community, a press release will be issued outlining the potential threat and steps taken to minimize that threat. The privacy of affected individuals will be protected during reporting unless disclosure of names is mandated by law.