

LAST REVISION – OCTOBER 27, 2009

SUMMARY

- As a general principle, as long as learners can be provided with a safe learning environment, there should be no restriction on their clinical placements.
- All learners and faculty should use appropriate infection control measures to prevent infection.
- During a clinical placement/rotation, the clinical facility will provide the following, and students will follow the protocol of the facility:
 - Provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), including N95 masks, by the hospital;
 - Management of the health care workers, including students, by the provision of prophylaxis to exposed health care workers either through a prescription for Tamiflu or being provided with the drug;
 - A learner who develops symptoms of influenza should not come to work and, in addition to seeking appropriate medical care, must follow the procedures for notification defined by the program and the health care institution (i.e. inform the preceptor/attending/senior medical resident and inform the program as well as notifying Occupational Health/Employee Health Service, in accordance with the institution's policy).

While in class, students will self-screen, and use the self-report tool on the McMaster web site (http://www.mcmaster.ca/opr/h1n1_flu/).

Preamble:

- Who are the guidelines for?
- Why do they say what they say?

General:

- Overview of infection control practices
- Where to find more information

Learners:

- What is expected of learners during a pandemic or local outbreak?
- What learners should do if they are ill

Faculty:

- What is the role of faculty with respect to learners in the clinical setting during a pandemic or local outbreak?

Programs:

- How will programs prepare to support their learners during a pandemic or local outbreak?
- How do the programs throughout the Faculty of Health Sciences relate to one another in sharing information?

Preamble:

These guidelines have been developed to give direction to the learners, faculty, staff, and programs of the Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University about how to manage clinical placements during a pandemic or local outbreak of influenza. The schools and educational programs affected by these guidelines include the School of Nursing; the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine (Physician Assistant, undergraduate MD and post-graduate programs); the School of Rehabilitation Science; the Midwifery Education Program, and Undergraduate and Graduate Health Sciences programs. These guidelines refer to learners who are participating in activities (academic, clinical, and research) which occur in clinical environments.

Pandemic and outbreak planning requires that policies and practices are flexible enough to match the current and local circumstances. Clinical education in the Faculty of Health Sciences occurs in a wide range of geographic and jurisdictional environments. The clinical settings (hospitals to community placements) and programs vary significantly. As a result of these realities, these guidelines do not specify information such as which learners should be allowed to work in which environments, which diagnostic tests or therapeutic interventions should be utilized under what circumstances, or policies about who should be speaking to whom for each program and clinical site.

Instead, the guidelines refer learners, faculty, staff, and programs to existing policies; and outline a fluid continuum of relationships and responsibilities which may be necessary under pandemic and outbreak conditions. Where such policies or relationships do not currently exist, these guidelines offer a possible roadmap to aid in their development.

Finally, these guidelines offer flexibility to programs, and their clinical staff, and public health partners to improve responsiveness to the local and current circumstances. As a general principle, as long as learners can be provided with a safe learning environment and resources are adequate, there should be no restriction on their clinical placements.

General:

What are the most appropriate infection control practices for limiting the transmission of an infectious disease?

1. “Self screen” for symptoms of infection before entering any clinical setting. Stay home if you are ill and use appropriate infection control practices to protect the people with whom you may come in contact (your family, friends, visitors, etc.).
2. Always use universal precautions. Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand hygiene before and after patient care, and before and after procedures.
3. Follow posted infection control guidelines. When you are uncertain about how to implement the guidelines, ask someone who has the knowledge or check with your local infection control personnel. Faculty should act as role models in encouraging learners to follow guidelines. We are all role models to patients, their families, friends, and caregivers when we follow the posted guidelines.
4. Use appropriate personal protective equipment (gowns, gloves, masks, face shield, respirator, goggles, etc.) when indicated. Receive training in the appropriate use of equipment if you are not certain about its use. When the required equipment is not available, contact the appropriate supervisor or infection control.
5. Use proper coughing and sneezing etiquette (i.e. coughing or sneezing into your arm rather than into your hand).

**Where can I go to get more information about pandemic or outbreak conditions?
Where do I get more information about specific infectious illnesses?**

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC):

- Follow links to information about current infectious disease pandemics or outbreaks (i.e. “H1N1 Flu Virus”).
- Check out information for “Health Care Professionals” for guidelines on prevention of disease transmission.

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/default.aspx>

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC):

- Provides support to Canada’s healthcare agencies and infrastructure to aid in health promotion and prevention of disease, including infectious diseases.
- Contains information for health professionals about current infectious diseases of concern and infection control practices.

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php>

MOHLTC – Public Health Units:

- For information about your local circumstances, refer to the above websites, as well as your local public health unit website. All of the websites for the public health units are available on the MOHLTC website.

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_dt.html

Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) - Influenza Surveillance Protocol for Ontario Hospitals:

- Provides information to Ontario hospitals concerning recommendations for immunization, medical exemption to vaccination, high risk patients, and use of prophylaxis during an outbreak.

<http://www.oha.com/Services/HealthSafety/Documents/Protocols/Influenza%20Protocol.pdf>

Hospital internet/intranet for local hospital policies related to outbreak and pandemic.

McMaster University:

- H1N1 flu information and self reporting tool.

http://www.mcmaster.ca/opr/h1n1_flu/