

INFLUENZA POLICY FOR HCOP STUDENT PHARMACISTS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

Responsible administrator: Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs and Outreach

Last updated/reviewed: 2/15/24

POLICY:

- Influenza is caused by a number of virus strains that are typically seasonally contracted between October and March (late fall through late spring) in the United States. Influenza is an airborne virus that can be spread from one person to another, and can result in acute illness that can last up to 3 weeks, potentially leading to increased absenteeism among HCOP employees and students.
- The purpose of the policy is to outline the procedure to be followed by all HCOP students (this includes both student pharmacists and graduate students) in order to decrease the risk of contracting the flu and to outline steps to be taken for HCOP professional and graduate students who have developed flu-like symptoms during flu season (October through March of each year); have visited a health care professional and received a confirmed diagnosis of the influenza; or who are being treated by a health care provider for suspected influenza.
- This policy considers the current high prevalence of influenza in the United States. These policies build upon the policies of Auburn University with specific modifications to address HCOP's unique circumstances.
- HCOP's faculty, staff, and administration are committed to working in conjunction with the Auburn University administration to facilitate completion of the Doctor of Pharmacy and graduate degrees by the students in our school. This includes using as much flexibility as possible regarding procedures by which students can make up work if they contract the flu.

PROCEDURES:

Prevention

- All Auburn University Harrison College of Pharmacy's professional students are required (as of Fall 2015) to receive an annual seasonal influenza vaccination, and to provide validated immunization records to Clinical Affairs and Outreach's Experiential Programs Office.
- All Auburn University Harrison College of Pharmacy's graduate students are highly encouraged to receive an annual influenza vaccine. Graduate students who will interact with patients or will work in a healthcare setting are required (as of Fall 2015) to receive an annual seasonal influenza vaccination, and to provide validated immunization records to their respective department head.
- Influenza vaccination will be the student's responsibility including any associated cost of vaccination. If a student refuses to get an influenza vaccination, the student must sign a declination form stating the reason that the student is refusing to take the vaccine.

Then the student will be required to wear a facial mask that covers the mouth and nose whenever they are in patient care areas (such as on IPPE patient care visits, working in any health care environment such as community or hospital pharmacies, health fairs, IPE events, other co-curricular activities, etc.).

- Students should also exercise appropriate prevention measures as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) including frequent hand washing, covering mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing, and avoiding, whenever possible, persons that are known or suspected of having influenza.
- It is the professional responsibility of students to take those actions that will minimize the spread of influenza to other members of the Auburn University community, **and particularly to patients**. Students are asked to self-isolate should they develop influenza-like symptoms.

Infection Control and Management

Policies Related to Class Attendance

Students with influenza or influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, extreme tiredness, and possibly diarrhea and/or vomiting) should self-isolate and not attend classes or participate in other activities within the HCOP. Students with influenza-like symptoms should not return to class and other school activities until they have been afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Students are to notify their course instructors of their illness and absence at the earliest possible time. **HCOP faculty and staff members may ask students with influenza-like symptoms to leave the building and return to their place of residence; student pharmacists are expected to comply with such requests.**

Students are strongly encouraged to seek medical care should they develop influenza-like symptoms. This will facilitate proper evaluation and the timely provision of antiviral medications to appropriate individuals. Any medical evaluation and treatment will be the student's responsibility. A medical excuse provided by a medical facility that is signed and dated might be required by course instructors before any make-up work will be allowed.

Policies related to Introductory Pharmacy Practice Experiences (IPPE) IPE, and Co-curricular Activities:

Student pharmacists with influenza or influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, extreme tiredness, and possibly diarrhea and/or vomiting) should immediately notify their faculty mentor(s) and the IPPE Coordinator. The IPPE Coordinator will provide further instruction and guidance to the student with regards to isolation from the IPPE direct patient care activities and other students, including guidance on whether the student should seek further medical evaluation and possible treatment. Student pharmacists with known or suspected influenza infection should not conduct any patient visits until cleared to do so by Experiential Programs Office (EPO) staff. EPO staff will notify the faculty mentors/preceptors regarding status of any affected student pharmacists on their particular teams. Student isolation from and return to patient care activities will be based on the CDC recommendations regarding length of time away from a practice site/patients for health care workers.

Policies related to Introductory and Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences at Affiliated Training Sites:

Student pharmacists with influenza or influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat,

headache, muscle aches, extreme tiredness, and possibly diarrhea and/or vomiting) should immediately notify their preceptor and regional coordinator. The preceptor and/or regional coordinator will provide further instruction and guidance to the student with regards to isolation from the practice site and other students including guidance on whether the student should seek further medical evaluation and possible treatment. Student decisions regarding medical evaluation and possible treatment should be based on severity of symptoms and/or underlying medical conditions.

Student removal from the practice site will be based on the specific policies and procedures of the practice site. Return to the practice site will follow practice site policies and procedures, which should be based on CDC recommendations regarding length of time away from the health care setting.

Any medical evaluation and treatment related to suspected influenza infection will be the student's responsibility.

Policies related to the Practice Ready Curriculum:

Student pharmacists with influenza or influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, headache, muscle aches, extreme tiredness, and possibly diarrhea and/or vomiting) should immediately notify the PRC Curricular Coordinator. The Curricular Coordinator will provide further instructions and guidance with regards to attendance and recommendations for further medical evaluation and treatment. Student pharmacists with known or suspected influenza infection should not attend class (facilitation or large group).

In the case of absence due to suspected or confirmed influenza, the Curricular Coordinator will notify the respective faculty. Students with influenza-like symptoms should not return to class and other school activities until they have been afebrile for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Every effort will be made to provide access to missed information; however, given the nature of the course, this may not always be possible. The Curricular Coordinator will discuss available options with students on a case-by-case basis.

Policy Maintenance

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Clinical Services Advisory Committee (CSAC) and updated as necessary to ensure current standards and procedures are adhered to and that current CDC recommendations are being followed. The Executive Director of Experiential Programs and HCOP administration will continue to work with University administration to ensure appropriate compliance with this policy.

Contact information

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Additional references:

1. [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) and Prevention- Influenza \(Flu\).](#) (Accessed 10/31/23)