

Policy Name: Vaccinations and Health Record

Scope: Mercyhurst University

Issuing/Reviewing Authority: Cohen Student Health Center

Original Date: 9/2002

Most Recent Revision Date: 6/01/2019

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to assure that:

1. all new incoming students provide the Cohen Student Health Center with a complete Mercyhurst University Pre-Admission Health Record
2. the Cohen Student Health Center has adequate individual medical information on incoming students to permit safe and effective care, and to guide the Center in the event of an emergency health event
3. the risk of outbreaks of infectious diseases on campus is minimized, and the health and welfare of the campus community protected
4. Mercyhurst University is in compliance with Pennsylvania law, and within the guidelines of the American College Health Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Definitions:

1. **Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP):** a panel of experts who provide recommendations to government agencies on the use of vaccines.
2. **American College Health Association (ACHA):** the national professional organization for college campus health centers across the United States. ACHA publishes recommended guidelines and standards of care for campuses, including the *Recommendations for Institutional Prematriculation Immunizations*, and the guideline *Tuberculosis Screening and Targeted Testing of College and University Students*. Their standards are based on the recommendations of ACIP and the CDC, and are utilized by Mercyhurst University.
3. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** A federal agency that conducts and supports health promotion, prevention and preparedness activities in the United States, with the goal of improving overall public health. CDC works closely with the various state departments of health.
4. **Mercyhurst University Pre-Admission Health Forms (or “Health Record”):** The Health Record includes medical history and demographic data; results of a physician/health care provider’s recent physical exam; immunization history; TB screening interview and, if indicated, TB testing results and follow-up care. Information in the Health Record is signed and dated by a physician and/or other accepted healthcare provider.
5. **“New incoming students”:** a phrase capturing all full-time incoming freshmen, first year transfer students, and first year graduate program students.

6. **“Living in University housing”**: students living in any residence hall, apartment, townhouse, or other dwelling owned by Mercyhurst University
7. **Pennsylvania College and University Student Vaccination Act of 2002**: a state law that requires students living in campus student housing to have received a meningococcal conjugate vaccination to protect against meningitis serogroups ACWY. The act permits a student to sign a waiver indicating that they have chosen not be vaccinated for medical, religious, or other reasons. A student who signs a waiver must indicate that they received detailed information on the risks associated with meningococcal disease and the availability and the effectiveness of vaccines.
8. **Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH)**: the state department charged with working to reduce the number of deaths in the Commonwealth due to lifestyle, illness, and injury. Mercyhurst is required to notify the Erie County Department of Health (ECDH) in the event of certain student illnesses. The CDC and PA DOH work together with campuses to prevent and manage outbreaks.
9. **“Physician and healthcare provider”**: the term used in this policy to indicate those healthcare professionals qualified to evaluate and attest to the student’s current physical status, immunization history, TB screening interview and testing/interventions, and any medical reason(s) to waive the meningitis vaccine requirements for students in campus-owned housing. Licensed physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants qualify under this term.
10. **Serogroups A, B, C, W, and Y**: The five groups of related bacteria that cause most meningococcal disease. Meningococcal conjugate vaccine protects against serogroups A, C, W, and Y. Meningitis B vaccines protects against serogroup B.

Policy:

1. All new incoming students are **required** to provide documentation of two doses of the **measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine**. The first dose should not occur before the first birthday, and is typically given between 12-15 months. The second dose is typically provided between the ages of 4 and 6 years. Vaccine doses must be separated by a minimum of 28 days.
2. All new incoming students scheduled to live in University housing are **required to have the meningococcal conjugate vaccine** that protects against infections caused by **serogroups A, C, Y, and W-135**. Proof of meningitis vaccine, or an approved waiver request, **must be received by Cohen Student Health Center before a student is permitted to move-in to university owned housing**.
3. While not required, Mercyhurst **strongly recommends** that students receive a **booster dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine at the age of 16** to assure effective protection.
4. Students who request exemptions to required vaccinations must provide a letter from their healthcare provider specifying the medical reason that the vaccine(s) cannot be provided. Students requesting a waiver for any other reasons must document the reason on the waiver form, and submit it in a timely fashion prior to move-in dates.

5. In the event of an outbreak of vaccine-preventable diseases the University will consider and may require temporary exclusion of non-immunized students from school in order to reduce the spread of the disease. Financial refunds or additional time to make up any missed coursework are not guaranteed in the event of mandatory absence under this policy.
6. In addition to the required meningitis and MMR vaccines, it is **strongly recommended** that all new incoming students have received the following vaccines/vaccine series: tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap), polio, varicella (chicken pox), hepatitis A and hepatitis B, human papillomavirus (HPV).
7. Meningitis serogroup B vaccine is not required, but is strongly recommended for those students with certain medical conditions. CDC indicates that the meningitis serogroup B vaccine **may** be administered to all adolescents and young adults (16 – 23 years old), preferably at age 16-18, so that they have protection during the years of increased risk. CDC indicates that the vaccine **should** be given to this age group in the event of a serogroup B meningococcal disease outbreak or if certain medical conditions are present. These conditions include complement component deficiencies, individuals taking the medication Soliris, and functional or anatomic asplenia (including sickle cell disease).
8. Pneumococcal vaccine for students is recommended for students with certain medical risk factors.
9. All students are strongly encouraged to receive annual flu vaccines.
10. Students who have not submitted the required health record documents by early fall have a registration hold put on their account that will not permit them to register for spring classes until the documents have been received and reviewed. Students entering campus for a first time in January who have not submitted the required health documents within the first few weeks of the semester will have a similar hold put on the account for the next fall semester.
11. The University will report the occurrence of any of the above diseases that appear on the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) reportable diseases list to the DOH, and collaborate as indicated in the care of the student and in providing updates to DOH.
12. Pennsylvania DOH and the Cohen Student Health Center will collaborate and coordinate in the evaluation and/or management of any cases of latent TB infection or active TB. Mercyhurst Health Center decisions relative to class attendance, presence on campus, proof of follow-up treatments, and additional screenings will be consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania DOH.

Procedures

13. Students are advised through the admissions process of the need to complete the Health Record and appropriate vaccinations. The Health Record form, along with the meningitis education sheet and waiver, are posted on the campus HUB site location for all incoming freshman, first year transfer student, and graduate students to complete. The Health Center should receive the fully-completed Health Record no later than the dates specified on the form, and well before a move-in date.

14. The parent/guardian of students under age 18 are required to complete and sign any waiver requests.
15. Receipt and review of records is completed by Cohen Student Health Center. Codes indicating receipt of key parts of the record are entered into Colleague.
16. Athletes are required to complete the Health Record and return it to the Health Center in the same manner as all other new incoming students. Athletics' physicals and health information forms do not take the place of the Health Record, or of the vaccine requirements of Mercyhurst University.
17. The Health Center will work closely with the office of Academic Support, Admissions, Graduate Admissions, Athletics, and other designated areas to assure effective implementation of this policy
18. Students/parents wishing additional information on items contained in this policy will be encouraged to contact the Cohen Student Health Center.