

Infectious and Communicable Disease Policy

It is the policy of the Mercyhurst University Professional Athletic Training Program not to discriminate against any applicant, employee or student who has or is suspected of having a communicable disease. As long as an applicant, employee, or student is able to satisfactorily perform the essential functions of an employee or student, and there is no medical evidence indicating that the employee's or student's condition is a threat to the health or safety of the individual, coworkers, students, athletes, or the public, an employee or student shall not be denied employment, continued active student status, nor shall an applicant be denied employment, nor shall a student be denied admission to the campus or classes based on whether or not he/she is suspected of having a communicable disease. The program will consider the educational, employment, or student status of individuals with a communicable disease or suspected of a communicable disease on an individual, case-by-case basis following procedures outlined by the University.

Mercyhurst University action plan is as follows:

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Student Health Services, as an agent for Mercyhurst University, monitors communicable disease cases that may affect the well-being of students' faculty and staff. In the event of a communicable disease event, SHS consults with and receives guidance from Erie County Health Department, PA department of health as well as the CDC (Center for Disease Control). The consulting agency is determined by the disease presented, the number of cases, and the guidelines and recommendations established by state and federal laws. Disease events are co-managed by the SHS and the consulting agency to ensure the safety of individual and the campus community. As an agent of Mercyhurst University, SHS informs the university administration, faculty, staff and students, as needed to provide education to limit the impact of a communicable disease event. SHS works with the offices of public relations, the president and student affairs to create methods of communications such as the use of e-mail, faculty announcements, awareness statements for coaches and other administrative staff, articles for student newspapers and residence hall awareness campaign as recommended by the Erie County health department and the PA department of health.

Communicable diseases are defined as those diseases that can be transmitted from one person to another such as pandemic flu, tuberculosis, meningitis, chicken pox, SARS, hepatitis and others. Individuals contracting communicable disease should report the case to student health services immediately by calling (814) 824-2431. SHS Services will work with the Erie County

MERCYHURST UNIVERSITY

Health Department and the PA department of health to provide preventive measures to those who were exposed: such as immunization, distribution of antibiotics or antiviral medications as necessary to prevent further spread of the disease. If quarantine of exposed individuals is needed a building on campus will be dedicated for this purpose, food and other needed items will be provided by the campus food service or the Red Cross.

Communicable Disease Response – Incident Action Plan (Example – Pandemic Flu)

Pre-Level 1 Actions – This plan is intended to address a variety of communicable disease outbreaks. In the majority of situations, there will not be advance time to prepare for the first case of human to human transmission. It is therefore imperative that campus departments initiate various “pre-level 1” actions to assure that they are prepared in the event that an infectious disease is confirmed that may have the potential to spread to campus in a very short time frame. The following actions are recommended as “pre-level 1”.

1. Essential personnel – the campus should determine “who” the essential personnel are in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. This would include civil service staff to maintain or depopulate facilities staff, housing personnel, administrators, etc. The list of “non-essential” personnel should be prepared in addition to “call-off” notices that can be activated on short notice.
2. All campus units should review business continuity plans and/or review their individual unit responses to situations involving short staffing, class cancellations, 24 hour operations, event schedules and cancellation, emergency needs, etc.
3. The Campus should clearly communicate the status of essential vs. non-essential personnel.
4. Assess the quantity of N95 respirators and assure that an adequate supply is on hand.
5. Campus units with essential personnel should schedule them to receive fit test and training on respiratory protection from the Safety & Health Department.
6. The Campus Emergency Operations Committee will direct the campus response during an infectious disease outbreak. Individuals with copies of this document are encouraged to review it to assure they understand the protocols. Additional campus resources (experts in specific fields, unit resources, etc.) will work with the Emergency Management Team as part of the Incident Command System.