

Policy Name: Vaccinations and Health Record

Scope: Mercyhurst University

Issuing/Reviewing Authority: Cohen Student Health Center

Original Date: 9/2002

Most Recent Revision Date: 4/10/2017

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to assure that:

1. All new incoming students provide the Cohen Student Health Center with a completed Mercyhurst University Health Record including an immunization history, the results/follow-up of a tuberculosis (TB) screening interview, and results of a recent physical examination.
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.

Definitions:

1. **Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP):** a panel of experts who provide recommendations to government agencies on the use of vaccines. ACIP endeavors to reduce illnesses from those diseases that vaccines can prevent.
2. **American College Health Association (ACHA):** the national professional organization for college campus health centers across the United States. ACHA publishes 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*. These standards are based on the recommendations of ACIP and the CDC, and represent best practice.
3. **Mercyhurst University Health Record:** a packet of forms that provides health information on individual incoming students. 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. This Health Record will be signed and dated by a physician and/or other accepted healthcare provider.
4. **"New incoming students":** all full-time incoming freshmen, first year transfer students, and first year graduate program students.
5. **"Living in University housing":** students living in any residence hall, apartment, townhouse, or other dwelling owned by Mercyhurst University

6. **Pennsylvania College and University Student Vaccination Act of 2002:** the state law requiring students living in campus housing to be immunized against meningococcal disease. The law permits students to sign a waiver based on medical, religious, or other objections that permits refusal of the vaccine. Students signing a waiver must indicate that they have received detailed information on the risks associated with meningococcal disease, the availability and effectiveness of the vaccine, and have provided documentation supporting the waiver as needed.
7. **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 DOH in the event of certain student illnesses. The CDC and DOH work together with campuses to prevent and manage outbreaks.
8. **“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.
9. **U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** a federal agency focused on prevention of disease through research and thorough investigation of disease outbreaks and patterns. CDC works closely with the various state Departments of Health including the Pennsylvania DOH.

Policy:

1. 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.**
2. All new incoming students are **required** to provide documentation of either two doses of the measles, **mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine** with the first dose occurring on or after the student’s first birthday and the second one at least one month later OR a lab test (“titer”) documenting immunity to Measles-Mumps-Rubella.
3. 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. Students requesting a waiver for “other reasons” will be expected to complete a health education session designed by the Health Center.
4. 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.

5. 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), and Serogroup B meningococcal. Pneumococcal vaccine for students is recommended for students with certain medical risk factors.
6. While not required, Mercyhurst **strongly recommends** that students who received a meningitis vaccine three or more years prior to start date on campus receive an additional meningitis vaccine to help assure adequate immunity. This is consistent with the recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American College Health Association (ACHA).
7. All students are strongly encouraged to receive annual flu vaccines.
8. Students who have not submitted the above required health record documents by September 15 will not be able to register for spring classes. The registration hold will be removed once a student completes the meningitis, health record, and TB requirements. Students entering campus for a first time in January who do not provide the above required documents by February 15 will not be able to register for summer or fall classes.
9. 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.
10. 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

11. 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 portal site location for all incoming freshman and first year transfer student to complete. Receipt and review of records is completed by Cohen Student Health Center.
12. 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.
13. 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. 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
16. Students/parents wishing additional information on items contained in this policy will be encouraged to contact the Cohen Student Health Center.