PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT: PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOOLS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: ALEXA CANNIZZO AND CHARI COHEN
Are health professions schools in Pennsylvania compliant with federal guidance and laws to protect students living with hepatitis B?

**Methodology:**
- Content analysis within a survey
- Used Google search engine to find PA accredited school websites, student handbooks, and student physical forms
  - Allied health programs analyzed:
    - Medical doctor/doctor of osteopathic medicine (MD/DO)
    - Physician assistant (PA)
    - Doctor of Dental Medicine (DMD)
    - Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
    - Registered Nurse (RN)
- Documented school policies in Excel spreadsheet
DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES

Based on the current legal framework and 2013 DOJ ruling, a health professions school is considered discriminatory to students with HBV infection if the school policy:

- Requires proof of immunity to HBV infection and does not permit a student without immunity to enroll or participate in clinical rotations;
- Requires proof that a person is not infected with HBV for that student to enroll or commence clinical rotations;
- Requires students to disclose their HBV infection to school administrators as a condition of attendance, if the school does not have policies in place to protect and accommodate the students;
- Dismisses a student or revokes admission because of an HBV infection;
- Alters a student’s educational track or clinical experience because of an HBV infection (or lack of HBV immunity) with or without their consent; or
- Requires an infected student to maintain an HBV DNA viral load below a specified threshold, even though that student is not expected to perform invasive, exposure-prone procedures as defined by CDC.
RESULTS

N = 83 PA Schools of Higher Education with accredited health professions programs

- 31 programs (37%) – policies appeared to align with CDC recommendations; have policies in place for the management of students with chronic hepatitis B
- 36 programs (43%) – policies appeared to be discriminatory based on criteria
- 16 programs (19%) – unclear policies requiring follow-up to determine consequences for student who tests positive for HBV or negative for immunity
- 34 out of the 36 programs that had discriminatory policies also had in place anti-discriminatory policies based on disability

- Lack of clear policies and transparency is a deterrent for students pursuing HC careers
- Lack of awareness of appropriate policies and federal legal protections
NYC HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SCHOOLS 2019 HBV POLICY ASSESSMENT

DANIEL ALOHAN
2019 HEALTH EQUITY FELLOW
MPH CANDIDATE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY MAILMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
RESULTS

- Total Schools Analyzed = 43

- 14 schools (31%) have *satisfactory* policies
  - “The College may not require a test for verification of HIV status or other communicable diseases (e.g., HBV) for the purpose of attaining or maintaining academic admission or continued matriculation” – SUNY Downstate Medical Center

- 19 schools (43%) have *unsatisfactory* policies
  - “No student will be permitted to begin and attend classes or clinical rotations if they have not provided satisfactory proof of required immunizations [including HBV] as required by the provider or otherwise.” – Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine

- 10 schools (22%) have *ambiguous/unfound* policies

*Policies were retrieved during summer 2019
 SOURCES