



PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT: PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH PROFESSIONS SCHOOLS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: ALEXA CANNIZZO AND CHARI COHEN



RESEARCH QUESTION & METHODOLOGY

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/unfounded* policies**

SOURCES

- https://sls.downstate.edu/student_affairs/_documents/student_handbooks/student_handbook_2017-18.pdf
- <https://tourocom.touro.edu/media/schools-and-colleges/tourocom/documents/StudentHandbookEffectiveJuly12018vJJ08022018ACCESSIBLE.pdf>