

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY**

Subject: **Fitness to Participate in Patient Care**

Policy Number:

Effective Date: **January 1990**

Revision Dates: **January 2002**

PURPOSE

To establish fitness guidelines for dental health care workers such as students, faculty, and clinical staff to participate in the patient care process in a manner that is safe for the patient and meets the standard of care of the University and the dental profession.

GENERAL POLICY

The University of Washington School of Dentistry requires that students, faculty, and clinical staff are physically and mentally fit to participate in the patient care process. Dental health care workers must abide by the basic principle of "first do no harm." It is therefore the duty of the school to remove clinic privileges from such workers who are afflicted with a contagious disease, or are impaired by either physical or mental handicap; by side effects of medical therapy, addictive drugs, alcohol, or other agents which may impair the judgment and/or psychomotor skills required to perform clinical services. Such actions shall be in accordance with policies of the University of Washington Health Science Center.

IMPLEMENTATION

I. Duty

A. The Dental Health Care Provider

It is the duty of a dental health care provider *not to participate* in the patient care process if he/she is impaired in such a manner that would jeopardize the health and safety of the patient and other workers. Anyone who does participate in the patient care process must perform to the standard of care for both the management of the patient and actual services rendered. Such standards have been established by the School of Dentistry and the dental profession.

B. Supervisional Faculty and Staff

It is the duty of supervisory faculty and staff to counsel dental health care workers under their supervision when appropriate as to their fitness to participate in patient care (see Appendix A). It is also the duty of such supervisors to inform the Associate Dean for Clinical Services (or designee) of possible breaches of duty by participants in the patient care process. Documentation of such reporting will utilize the standard *Unusual Incident/Accident Report* form.

II. Breach of Duty

A dental health care worker who breaches this duty may have clinic privileges either suspended or revoked immediately by the Associate Dean for Clinical Services (or designee). The re-establishment of clinic privileges is subject to the review of the recommendation of the worker's physician and approval by the Dean's Advisory Committee and the Dean.

III. Appeal Rights

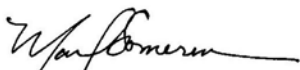
Dental health care workers have the right to appeal a decision to remove their clinic privileges to the Ethics and Professional Conduct Committee.

IV. Confidentiality

All proceedings dealing with the revocation or suspension of clinic privileges of a dental health care worker will be conducted with the highest level of confidentiality. Minutes of the Dean's Advisory Committee will not include the name of any dental health care worker under review.

Appendices: Appendix A, Guidelines for the Removal of Clinic Privileges from a Dental Health Care Worker

Dean of UW SOD:



Martha Somerman, Dean of the UW School of Dentistry

September 18, 2008

APPENDIX A

Guidelines for the Removal of Clinic Privileges from a Dental Health Care Worker

I. Dental Health Care Worker

A dental health care worker is any employee or student who comes in direct contact with the dental patient or any instruments, supplies, intraoral equipment, or devices used in the treatment process. Such persons include students, faculty, clinical staff, dispensary staff, sterilization personnel, and laboratory technicians.

II. Contagious Disease

The dental health care worker is expected to avoid patient care during contagious stages of infectious conditions. Such conditions may include:

1. Colds
2. Influenza
3. Measles
4. Hepatitis (all types)*
5. HIV*
6. CMV (Cephalomegalovirus)
7. Infectious skin lesions

*Note: Conditions with an asterisk are subject to review by the University of Washington Health Sciences Center Review Committee.

If the worker is in doubt as to whether he/she is contagious, standard barrier techniques should be utilized until a medical diagnosis can be obtained. The Associate Dean for Clinical Services has the authority to suspend clinic privileges of any worker and to request a medical clearance from the worker's physician to resume clinical activities.

III. Physical and/or Mental Impairment

Dental health care workers must be able to render care in a safe manner which meets the standard of care of the school and the dental profession. In the event that the worker is unable to perform to such standards, then clinic privileges will be either revoked or suspended. Such conditions which may cause such impairment may include:

1. Physical handicap
2. Mental handicap
3. Alcohol abuse
4. Side effects of medical therapy
5. Drug abuse