1. PURPOSE
Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) and its Agencies and Divisions are committed to protecting patients, residents, clients, physicians, students, volunteers and staff by
- Establishing an occupational health and safety immunity baseline on all employees.
- Identifying and providing preventative health measures and vaccinations applicable to the bona fide job requirements.
- Establishing a confidential electronic employee health file for continuing health and safety medical surveillance.

2. SCOPE
This policy applies to all employees, salaried Physicians and Residents (hereafter called “staff”) in the Provincial Health Services Authority and its Agencies and Divisions, regardless of whether they have direct or indirect contact with patients or residents.

3. POLICY
Baseline Immunity Assessments help to ensure that all employees are able to perform the tasks required within the scope of their job without foreseeable health consequences for employees, patients, or others in the workplace.

Maintenance of immunity against vaccine preventable diseases is an integral part of the Provincial Health Services Authority’s Workplace Health, Health & Wellness Program. In order to reduce the risk of employee exposure to communicable diseases from patients, laboratory specimens, or employee-to-employee exposures, and to reduce the risk of patients acquiring employee-transmitted infections, all workers in a health environment are required to comply with the BC Communicable Disease Control (BCCDC) and Canadian Immunization Guidelines, and relevant Standards of Practice.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

Senior Leadership
- Ensure Baseline Immunity Assessment Policy is relayed to all supervisory and Human Resources Personnel
- Ensure all Manager/Supervisors monitor employee compliance of the policy requirements, actively support prevention strategies, and take appropriate action as needed.
- Support and promote PHSA’s commitment to a safe and healthy workplace.

Managers/Supervisors
- Ensure staff is aware that the Baseline Immunity Assessment is a requirement within 2 weeks of hire.
- Have an understanding of the policy and rationale for compliance.
- Ensure employees are aware of the policy requirements, including the possibility of unpaid exclusion from work in the event of a communicable disease exposure (or
outbreak management controls), unless documented medical proof of contra-indications for immunization has been provided.

- Ensure all staff under their control complies with the Baseline Immunity Assessment Policy.
- Ensure staff is aware that all medical information is considered confidential, and will be maintained in their confidential electronic health files in the Workplace Health, Health & Wellness department, in accordance with FOIPPA (Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act).
- Note that in the event of an outbreak, the Medical Health Officer and the Manager/Supervisor may be provided with the employees’ immune status to that specific disease, which will be used in determining workplace restrictions.

Employees

- All employees are required to provide their vaccination history and known immunity status determined in the letter of offer, preferably prior to commencement of employment but no later than two weeks after date of hire.
- Contact the Workplace Health Call Centre (WHCC) by telephone to speak to an occupational health nurse.
- Provide documentation to the WHCC of a valid medical contraindication (such as past anaphylactic reaction), to any of the required vaccinations, as requested.
- Have an understanding of the policy and procedures.
- Be knowledgeable that failure to ensure adequate immunity to communicable diseases may result in unpaid exclusion from the worksite in the event of a communicable disease exposure (or outbreak management controls), unless documented medical proof of contra-indications for immunization has been provided.
- Be aware that all medical information is considered confidential, and will be maintained in their confidential electronic employee health file, in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- Note that in the event of an outbreak, the Medical Health Officer and the Manager/Supervisor may be provided with the employees’ immune status to that specific disease, which will be used in determining workplace restrictions.

Corporate Human Resources

- Ensure the “New hire” package includes instructions to call the WHCC within 2 weeks of hire.

Workplace Health

- Develop, implement, and deliver a Baseline Assessment program to all employees in all of PHSA and its Agencies and Divisions.
- Coordinate and implement promotion of benefits of immunization assessment program through regular communication channels and education.
- Monitor employees’ immune status, obtain serology results as required, and provide ongoing immunization to employees.
- Advise Human Resources/Management of fitness to work status of individual employees in reference to communicable diseases.
- Coordinate with Infection Control / Medical Health Officer regarding communicable disease illness and/or symptoms and outbreak management.
- Establish and maintain records and statistics as per BCCDC guidelines.
- Maintain and store information in accordance with FOIPPA requirements.

5. PROCEDURES

5.1 Baseline Immunity Assessment

- During the interview process, the manager will inform new employees of the requirement for a baseline assessment. The job offer letter for all new employees will include the requirement to call the WHCC preferably prior to, but not later than 2 weeks of commencement of employment.
- The baseline immunity assessment is intended as an opportunity to review the employees’ current health and immune status relative to the occupational health hazards.
associated with their job, and provide necessary vaccinations upon entry to the workplace.

- All health information received will be maintained in the confidential electronic employee health file.

5.2 Immunization status and vaccinations

- All new employees will be screened for immune status needs within the bona fide occupational requirements of their job.
- Immunity and risk status assessment will include: Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Varicella, Hepatitis B (if job tasks have the potential for blood/body fluid exposure), Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis and Influenza.
- All employees will be required to report the following:
  - d/m/y of previous immunizations to date,
  - available titre levels for rubella, varicella and Hepatitis B,
- Vaccinations specific to occupational risks will be offered in accordance with Canadian Immunization and BCCDC guidelines.
- Employees with a medical contraindication to various vaccinations (e.g. anaphylactic reaction) must provide medical documentation of their contraindication, as requested.
- Employees may request a copy of their immunization status from their health files by calling the WHCC.

5.3 Occupational Health Nurse

- Review employee’s risk status.
- Conduct assessment and review employee’s immune status.
- Complete laboratory requisition for immune status titre levels as required, obtain results and advise employee accordingly.
- Should the employee not contact the WHCC within 2 weeks of hire, a reminder will be sent by the WHCC to the employee. Failure to respond within 7 days will result in a 2nd reminder with a copy forwarded to the employee’s manager for follow-up with the employee.

6. REQUIRED IMMUNIZATIONS FOR WORKERS IN A HEALTH CARE ENVIRONMENT

Refer to PHSA Immunization Protocol and risk criteria in accordance with BCCDC and Canadian Immunization guidelines.

7. DEFINITIONS

Health care workers (HCWs) include persons who provide health care to patients or work in institutions that provide patient care (e.g., physicians, nurses, emergency medical personnel, dental professionals, laboratory technicians; medical, dental, nursing and laboratory technician students; hospital volunteers; and administrative and support staff in health-care institutions). (BCCDC 16.2 Guidelines for Health and Childcare Worker Immunization Programs)

Employee: includes salaried employees, salaried Physicians and Residents at PHSA and their Agencies and Divisions.

8. REFERENCES

8.1 BC Centre for Disease Control:
- CDC Prevention and control: http://www.bccdc.ca/default.htm
- BCCDC Immunization Programs: http://www.bccdc.ca/imm-vac/default.htm

8.2 Immunization of Health and Childcare Workers (16.0)
(BCCDC Immunization schedules): http://www.bccdc.ca/NR/rdonlyres/3E63F4F8-BD1A-4F4D-B716-3D77B25046E2/0/SectionIII_ImmunizationofSpecialPopulations.pdf
8.3 BC Healthfiles
http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/

8.4 Canadian Immunization Guide

8.5 NACI (National Advisory Committee on Immunizations
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/

8.6 Guideline for infection control in healthcare personnel

8.7 BC Centre for Disease Control
Epidemiology Services, Facility Influenza Immunization Policy

8.8 British Columbia Medical Journal
The Importance of Influenza Immunization for Healthcare Workers, March 2000

8.9 CCDR (Canada Communicable Disease report)
Statement on Influenza Immunization for Healthcare Workers, March 2000

8.10 Public Health Agency of Canada – Immunization and Vaccines
• http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/index.html
• Immunization schedules – Public Health Canada
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/is-cv/index.html#b
• Immunizations for adults – Specific Risk Groups
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/im/is-cv/index.html#tab6

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