

Communicable Disease Policy for HCC Students and Employees

Communicable diseases are diseases which are capable of being transmitted to other individuals in various ways. It is the policy of Hagerstown Community College not to discriminate against any student or employee who has or is suspected of having a communicable disease. As long as the student's or employee's condition is not a threat to the health or safety of the individual, other students or employees or the campus community as a whole, he or she may continue employment or attend classes and use college services and facilities.

Health care providers are required to report specific diseases to the Health Department, but colleges are not. If a student or employee is diagnosed by a physician in Washington County to have a reportable communicable disease, the Health Department will alert the College administration about the student or employee and the diagnosis and offer recommendations for actions to be taken on campus, if any. There is no requirement that would mandate county health departments in Pennsylvania or West Virginia Counties to contact the College. However, it shall be HCC policy to notify in writing the county health departments in West Virginia and Pennsylvania, which are physically adjacent to Washington County, asking that they notify HCC if they learn of an HCC student or employee that has a communicable disease and offer appropriate recommendations. The College reserves the right to impose a stricter standard than that recommended by the reporting health department by prohibiting attendance if, in its determination, such a step is necessary for the safety of its employees and students.

Students or employees who know or believe that they are infected are expected to seek medical advice and treatment and are obligated to conduct themselves responsibly for the protection of others. Since HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) protects the privacy of students' or employees' physical or mental health information, faculty and staff of the College should not ask students or employees to disclose information about their health conditions. However, if students or employees choose to disclose such information, faculty or staff should inform the President or his designee.

The President or his designee will review the status of students or employees with communicable diseases or suspected communicable diseases on an individual basis taking into consideration all available information on the specific case at hand. Strict confidentiality will be maintained regarding the identity of infected students or employees, and information will be disclosed to involved College staff on a limited, need-to-know basis. It may be determined that the student or employee should not be allowed to attend class or continue employment or to be on campus on a temporary basis until the contagious stage of the disease has passed. The student or employee may appeal the decision following established due process procedures.

A summary of this policy will be placed in the student and staff handbooks and on HCC's Web site.