



**Policy Title:** Policy on Learner Health  
**Functional Area:** ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE

**Status:** FINAL  
**Effective:** January 2020  
**Approved by:** SOM Leadership Council  
**Policy Contact:** Director of Student Affairs  
**Responsible Office:** Office of Admissions and Student Affairs  
**Last Reviewed/Updated:** July 2019; 11/30/2020

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this document is to outline the guidelines and requirements for learner health at the UIWSOM.

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### **Description**

This policy details the learner requirements for immunizations, certifications, health insurance, physical examinations, criminal background testing, drug testing and the documentation of these requirements for matriculation throughout the DO program. It also details the needle stick policy and the proper guidelines to implement in the case of a needle stick injury/puncture wound.

**Policy Statement:** All learners are required to have health insurance and up-to-date immunizations, physical examinations, drug testing, and criminal background checks.

### **Learner Health**

#### **Spiritual Health**

UIWSOM celebrates the diversity of religious experience and faith traditions represented in its learning communities and challenges its constituents to grow spiritually as whole people. The Catholic Chapel and Interfaith Room provide space where learners, faculty, staff, and visitors are encouraged to develop a deeper understanding of their own faith traditions and those of others. Their presence is meant to encourage increased respect and mutual consideration among people of different faith, ethnic and cultural traditions. These spiritual spaces are open for meditation, prayer, or for finding peace and quiet during the busy day. They can also be reserved for spiritual activities such as worship services, lectures or meetings of a spiritual nature.

#### **Insurance**

All UIWSOM learners are required to have medical insurance coverage. Fees for the university's comprehensive Wellfleet Health Plan, a Cigna Network(link), is added to the learner's tuition and fee bill if a learner does not provide proof of valid medical coverage through PreCheck ([www.precheck.com](http://www.precheck.com)) and submit the required UIW waiver [CLICK HERE](#). Valid medical insurance coverage must be a health plan that is comparable or better to the Wellfleet Plan. The UIWSOM does NOT accept CareLink Health, Oscar Health, or Medicaid. The Wellfleet Health Plan coverage protects an osteopathic medical student 24 hours a day, whether at home, school or while traveling. This coverage is also in effect during interim vacation periods.

#### **Health Requirements**

UIWSOM utilizes a national background screening and compliance management tracking system, PreCheck ([www.precheck.com](http://www.precheck.com)) for maintenance and verification of all required documentation including immunizations, certifications, physical exam records, criminal background and drug testing.

- Incoming first year learners are required to:
  - Undergo and submit immunization records, physical examination, drug testing and background check by July 1<sup>st</sup> prior to matriculation and provide updated immunization records or lab titer results on a yearly basis.
  - Undergo a background check annually.

- Second through Fourth Year Learners are required to:
  - Undergo an annual influenza vaccine, TB test, physical examination, and drug testing with results submitted by September 30<sup>th</sup> of each academic year.
  - Provide updated immunization records or lab titer results on a yearly basis as needed.
  - Undergo a background check annually.

## Immunizations

The cost of immunizations is the responsibility of the learner. All learners are responsible for providing official and complete documentation of having received an immunization. Updated and current immunizations must be submitted to PreCheck ([www.precheck.com](http://www.precheck.com)) by September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year of matriculation.

Incomplete immunization records may delay matriculation, ability to begin clinical rotations, or continue in the UIW School of Osteopathic Medicine program. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in a professionalism violation, or dismissal from the UIW School of Osteopathic Medicine program.

- Meningococcal Vaccination – First year learners, if younger than age of 22 years at matriculation are required to have a record of the meningococcal vaccine submitted to the agency by June 10<sup>th</sup> prior to starting in July. The learner must have been immunized within the past five (5) years prior to starting at the UIWSOM.
- Hepatitis B alone or Hepatitis A/B Combo- A standard Hepatitis B series (3 injections) or the expedited Hepatitis A & B (TWINRIX) combo series (4 injections) and antibody titer results are required.
  - If the Hepatitis B surface antibody titer is negative or nonreactive, the entire series must be repeated as well as antibody titer results.
    - Learners who are non-responders should be considered susceptible to HBV and must be counseled by the Medical Director of UIWSOM Health Services.
- Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap)/Tetanus-Diphtheria (Td) - One dose of adult Tdap is required. If the Tdap is more than ten (10) year old, a Td booster is required. Learners should receive decennial Td boosters, beginning ten (10) years after receiving Tdap.
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) – Two vaccines of each component or the combo (MMR) following the first birthday AND lab report of positive antibody titer for all three (3) components is required.
  - If the titer result is low or negative, learners will need two (2) doses of the MMR vaccine four (4) weeks apart
  - In cases of pregnancy or suspected pregnancy, **DO NOT** get the MMR vaccine, for low or negative titers. Medical documentation in writing of such instances are required to be submitted to PreCheck ([www.precheck.com](http://www.precheck.com)) and written notification given to the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs.
- Varicella (Chickenpox) - One of the following is required:
  - Two (2) vaccines following the first birthday AND a positive titer result.
  - Documented history of chickenpox AND a positive titer result
    - If titer result is negative or equivocal, learner will be required to submit evidence of a booster vaccine AND a repeat titer result. Repeat titer result must be administered three (3) months after the booster vaccine.
- Influenza (Flu) Vaccine – This is an annual requirement during flu season (September – March). It is required that learners get the flu vaccine each year while in the program by September 30<sup>th</sup>. Declinations are not acceptable.
- Polio Vaccine – Documentation of at least three (3) vaccinations of IPV/OPV - OR polio titer results.
  - If polio titer results are equivocal or low, a booster vaccine of IPV is required.
- Tuberculosis Screening – Documentation and submission of a non-reactive tuberculin skin test, negative IGRA blood test, QuantiFERON Gold TB blood test, OR T-spot blood test is required by June 10<sup>th</sup> for first year learners.

- Second through Fourth year learners are required to have an annual TB test by any of the above methods. Documentation is required by September 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Any Learners with a history of BCG vaccine must have a T-spot or QuantiFERON Gold blood TB test annually and submit documentation by the date required above.
- Any Learners with a reactive tuberculin skin test, must have a T-spot or QuantiFERON Gold TB blood test.
  - If POSITIVE – Documentation of a Chest x-ray with NEGATIVE results and a physical examination indicating that the learner is free of active tuberculosis within six (6) months of the first day of class is required.
    - Learners with a POSITIVE TB test and a NEGATIVE Chest x-ray will be evaluated for latent TB and required to comply with taking recommended medication under Direct Observational Therapy according to CDC guidelines. If at any time while in the program, should the latent TB convert to active TB the learner will be placed on an immediate leave of absence (*See Leave of Absence Policy*).

### Certifications

Certifications such as Basic Life Support (BCLS), Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Life Support (PALS), and other certifications as determined essential by the clinical rotation sites must be completed and documentation submitted to PreCheck ([www.precheck.com](http://www.precheck.com)). Learners will receive a certification card that can be provided to clinical rotation sites. Learners with expired certifications will not be allowed to begin clinical rotations.

### Physical Examinations

UIWSOM requires learners to submit a completed and signed medical health history and physical examination form *on the approved UIWSOM form prior to matriculation by July 1st AND on yearly basis by September 30th*. If there are any changes or updates to the medical history during the learner's program of study, documentation must be submitted to PreCheck ([www.precheck.com](http://www.precheck.com)).

- The information contained in the medical history and physical exam form will be used only by the UIWSOM for purposes of determining if a health threat/risk is posed for learners and/or patients during clinical experiences or clerkships. This information will remain as part of the secured learner file in and in PreCheck ([www.precheck.com](http://www.precheck.com)) and will remain confidential at all times.

### Criminal Background Check and Drug Testing

All entering UIWSOM learners are required to submit to and receive an acceptable criminal background check as a condition of enrollment. Acceptable learner background checks for enrollment are determined by the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs and the UIWSOM Admissions Committee. Some clinical facilities may require additional background investigation(s) prior to permitting learners to participate in experiential education activities. Program enrollment and clinical facility placement are contingent upon completion and receipt of an acceptable criminal background check and negative drug test unless previous documentation for physician prescribed medications is on record.

Acceptable learner background checks for experiential education participation or clinical sites are determined by a physician faculty member in the Office of Clinical Affairs with approval of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs. The investigational screenings include, but are not limited to the following for every state and county of residence: criminal record, alias name, warrants, protection orders, residential history, social security number, abuse registry, sex offender registry, Office of the Inspector General (OIG), and Nationwide Healthcare Fraud and Abuse cumulative sanction report.

In addition, some health care facilities require learners to submit to and pass a drug test prior to participation in experiential activities at the facility. Learners who do not complete or do not pass a drug test as required by these facilities

will not be allowed to participate in experiential education activities at that facility and may face sanctions, including possible dismissal from the program.

### **Drug Screens Prior to Clinical Rotations**

Clinical facilities are required by their accreditation agency, the Joint Commission, to provide a drug screening for security purposes on individuals who supervise care, render treatment, and provide services within the facility. UIWSOM is committed to assisting members of its learning community facing challenges associated with substance abuse.

Clinical rotations are a critical component in the osteopathic medical education curriculum. These rotations require drug screening for learner participation at their sites. Drug testing of osteopathic medical learners may be performed at any time. The drug testing policy provides for early identification and intervention prior to such abuse adversely affecting a learner's health, professional growth, and patient care and safety.

Learners with a positive drug screen may be barred from rotations and thus unable to fulfill degree program requirements. Identification of such learners before clinical rotations ensures appropriate assessment, indicated treatment and follow-up.

### **Physical Health and Mental Health Services**

Learners have access to physicians, clinics, and hospitals 24/7 in San Antonio and at UIWSOM core rotation sites. In addition, the *UIW Main Campus Student Health Center* is available Monday-Friday 8am-5pm to provide confidential primary care and OMM health services focused on primary preventative care, health education and counseling, care for acute illnesses and injuries, and information regarding the UIW insurance *Wellfleet*.

Behavioral Health care modalities, including face-to-face and telehealth services, are available 24/7 for all learners in the DO program. All services are confidential and are not recorded or filed in the learner's academic file. During orientation, these counseling services are explained to the learners by the Associate Dean for Health Services. A list of services is available on the UIWSOM website.

Student Wellness groups are available for voluntary participation and meet regularly. In addition, clinical psychologists are available for counseling regularly on the UIWSOM campus.

### **Environmental and Occupational Exposure and Universal Precautions**

In the event of a needle stick or exposure to body fluids while a learner is at an off-campus clinical site, the learner should follow the emergency procedures of the facility in which the exposure or illness occurred. If the services are not available at the facility, the learner must immediately notify the faculty supervisor/Clinical Site Director and seek medical attention.

### **Needlestick Insurance**

All UIWSOM learners are automatically enrolled for *needlestick insurance* for subsequent lab testing in the event of an exposure to blood or body fluids due to an accidental needle stick.

### **Needlestick/Puncture Wounds**

If you experience a needlestick/sharps injury/puncture wound or were exposed to the blood or body fluid of a patient during the course of clinical work, immediately follow these steps:

- Wash needlestick wound and cuts with soap and water
- Flush splashes to the nose, mouth, or skin with water
- Irrigate eyes with clean water, saline, or sterile irrigates
- Report the incident to your supervisor and obtain source patient information
- Immediately seek medical treatment

For all puncture wounds, please immediately see the *UIW Exposure Control Plan for Blood borne Pathogens* for instructions on next steps.

The *U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* recommend that learners receive evaluation and treatment within two hours of exposure. Report the incident immediately. For emergencies, contact the Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs during office hours at 210-283-6976 or after hours contact UIW Police Department at 210-829-6035.

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***This policy/procedure will be distributed to all learners, faculty, and staff and be effective immediately.***

REFERENCES to REGULATIONS and/or OTHER RELATED POLICIES:

Leave of Absence

Exposure Control Plan for Blood borne Pathogens

RESOURCES:

Software Tracking System - PreCheck