Communicable Disease Policy

The purpose of the Communicable Disease Policy is to protect the health and safety of the students enrolled in the Program as well as the patients with whom the students will come into contact. The CUAA ATP recognizes the importance of minimizing the exposure of athletes or patients in a clinical setting to communicable diseases. Therefore, it is recommended that athletic training students not report to their clinical site if they have active signs or symptoms of a communicable disease.

This policy is designed to provide ATSs, Preceptors, and AT faculty with a plan to assist in the management of students with infectious diseases as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This policy was developed using the recommendations established by the CDC for health care workers (www.cdc.gov).

Athletic training students may become exposed to contagious or infected student-athletes, patients, or other students. Modifications to a student’s participation in Practicum may be required. The following list of health conditions is not all inclusive but should serve as guidelines for conditions that may require modification of a student's participation.

**Skin Lesions:** Students should examine suspected or confirmed skin lesions in patients only with gloved hands (e.g., impetigo, tinea corpora, or HSV). The staff supervisor can determine if a small, non-draining, and covered lesion will adequately protect patients who come into contact with an athletic training student. If there is any question, the athletic training student must refrain from clinical involvement until cleared.

**Respiratory or GI Illnesses:** Students should practice health care hand washing habits to minimize self-inoculation and have a mask available to cover the nose and mouth (example: anyone with significant coughing, sneezing, fever, vomiting, or diarrhea should be considered contagious). Athletic training students must be free of fever for 24 hours and use extra care in hand washing during the illness. Other illnesses that require antibiotic therapy must follow a 24-hour rule; vomiting and diarrhea follow a 24-hour rule along with exceptional hand washing care.

**Blood or Bodily Secretions:** Students should follow Universal Precautions in the Blood-Borne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan of the facility. Athletic training students should exclude themselves from contact with patients when an open wound is present.

**Individual Risk:** Students with specific conditions must undergo individual evaluation and education sessions prior to interacting with student-athletes or patients (e.g., low immune function, asplenia, immune suppressive therapy, corticosteroid usage, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung disease, asthma, etc). For other conditions, the athletic training student should consult with a health care provider before discussing Practicum participation.

In situations where the ATS is ill, he/she should immediately notify the assigned Preceptor and either the ATP Director or the Clinical Education Coordinator of his or her status. If you incur an illness lasting for more than 1 day, you are required to see a physician or nurse practitioner to determine if the illness is actively communicable and to clear you to return to your clinical assignment. Athletic Training Students may use their own personal physician (the ATS is responsible for his or her own health insurance and are responsible for all related charges). The
ATS is to follow the recommendations and guidelines of the treating physician. If a physician is seen for an illness, a report of return to clinic permission from the physician is required before resuming the clinical rotation.

In the event that an ATS will be missing an inordinate amount of time due to adherence to the communicable disease policy, a decision of the student’s clinical status will be decided by the Clinical Education Coordinator and ATP Director. This may result in a reassignment of clinical responsibilities, a grade of incomplete due to medical reasons, and/or opportunities to make up lost experiences.

**What are Communicable Diseases?**
A communicable disease is a disease that can be transmitted from one person to another. There are four main types of transmission including direct physical contact, air (through a cough, sneeze, or other particle inhaled), a vehicle (ingested or injected), and a vector (via animals or insects).

**Communicable Diseases Cited by the CDC:**
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Conjunctivitis
- Cytomegalovirus infections
- Diarrhea diseases
- Diphtheria
- Gastrointestinal infections (acute)
- Herpes simplex
- Human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV)
- Hepatitis viruses
- Influenza
- Measles
- Meningococcal infections
- Mononucleosis
- Mumps
- Parovirus
- Pediculosis
- Pertussus
- Poliomyelitis
- Rabies
- Retroviral infections
- Rubella
- Staphylococcus aureus infection
- Streptococcal infection
- Tuberculosis
- Varicella
- Viral respiratory infections
- Herpes Zoster

**Guidelines for Prevention, of Exposure and Infection**
- Students must successfully complete annual OSHA/blood-borne pathogens training.
- Students are required to use proper hand washing techniques and practice good hygiene.
- Students are required to use Universal Precautions at all times when functioning as an ATS in the ATP. This applies to all on and off-campus clinical sites.
- Students are not to provide patient care if they have active signs or symptoms of a communicable disease.