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COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROCEDURES FOR EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS

Contents

PURPOSE: 2

OBJECTIVES: 2

SCOPE:..... 2

DEFINITIONS:..... 2

REPORTING: 2

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: 2

PREPAREDNESS: 3

PROCEDURES: 3

PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION: 4

PURPOSE:

Pursuant to board policies *4400 Employees with or Who Have Been Exposed to Communicable Diseases and 3680 Students with or Who Have Been Exposed to Communicable Diseases*, the purpose is to establish a uniform notification procedure to prevent and limit a significant communicable disease outbreak on all campuses of South Texas College.

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide a proper channel of communication to report and respond to suspected and confirmed communicable diseases.
- Safeguard the welfare of students and employees.
- Take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of students, employees, and the College community during global and local infectious disease events.
- Inform and advise the South Texas College community as needed.

SCOPE:

These procedures apply to all students, faculty, staff and visitors of South Texas College. These procedures shall be implemented for communicable diseases commonly found in the College population which can be transmitted by air, object, or through casual contact.

DEFINITIONS:

- Communicable Disease – an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxins that occurs through the direct or indirect transmission of the infectious agent or its products from an infected individual or via an animal, vector or the inanimate environment to a susceptible animal or human host. Examples of communicable diseases include, but are not limited to: Chicken Pox-Varicella, Mumps, Rubella, Measles, Rabies, Smallpox, Diphtheria, Influenza, Brucellosis, Meningitis - viral and bacterial, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis A, Anthrax, COVID-19, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).
- Pandemic - A geographically widespread epidemic spread over several countries or continents.

REPORTING:

Many communicable diseases are required to be reported to the health authority pursuant to State of Texas Laws. The College reports reportable diseases to the local health authority and the Texas Department of State Health Services in accordance with state laws.

In accordance with Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 81, Communicable Diseases, Sec. 81.002, each person shall act responsibly to prevent and control communicable disease.

Employees and students shall report communicable diseases to the following departments:

- Employees – Human Resources Benefits
- Students – Counseling & Student Accessibility Services

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:

Rule §97.7: [Diseases Requiring Exclusion from Campus](#)

In accordance with Texas Administrative Code, Title 25, Chapter 21, the link above contains a list of communicable diseases requiring exclusion from campus.

Refer to the [Texas Notifiable Conditions](#). These conditions require reporting to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

PREPAREDNESS:

South Texas College is committed to being prepared to respond to the above identified communicable diseases at each campus.

The College coordinates with local health authorities for the prevention and control of communicable disease incidents.

Based on the severity of the communicable disease, the Crisis Management Team will be activated and determine if notice will be issued, date to issue notice, and next steps to deploy. Public Relations and Marketing and/or the STC Department of Public Safety will disseminate official notifications concerning communicable diseases on campus, as appropriate.

Based on the nature of the communicable disease incident, the Pandemic Operations Response Plan will be activated and followed accordingly.

For more information about warnings, including the methods used to disseminate emergency information about a communicable disease incident, refer to the Multi-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan (MHEOP).

PROCEDURES:

Student Exposed to or Confirmed with a Communicable Disease

- Seek medical care, as needed.
- It is the responsibility of the student, if aware, to immediately report a suspected or confirmed communicable disease case at: studentwellbeing@southtexascollege.edu
- The Director of Counseling and Student Accessibility Services or designee shall report to the local health department and the Texas Department of State Health Services a student who has or is suspected of having a communicable disease. Click [here](#) for reporting form.
- The local health jurisdiction will provide recommendations for notification and decontamination. The College will comply with these recommendations.

Employees Exposed to or Confirmed with a Communicable Disease

- Seek medical care, as needed.
- It is the responsibility of the employee, if aware, to immediately report a suspected or confirmed communicable disease case at HR_Benefits@southtexascollege.edu
- The Office of Human Resources Benefits staff shall report to the local health department and the Texas Department of State Health Services an employee who has or is suspected of having a communicable disease. Click [here](#) for reporting form.
- The local health jurisdiction will provide recommendations for notification and decontamination. The College will comply with these recommendations.

PROTECTED HEALTH INFORMATION:

An individual's health condition is personal and confidential, and reasonable precautions will be taken to protect information regarding an individual's health condition. All College personnel will respect the health privacy rights of all individuals and will comply with all laws regulating the confidentiality of medical information, including but not limited to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, etc.