	Montana Mental Health Nursing Care Center **Policy Manual**	Policy Number	1510
		Original Date	12/23/1996
	Department: Exposure Control Plan	Revised Date	03/01/2016
	Blood Borne Disease and Health Care Workers		

POLICY:

Individuals infected with blood borne agents such as HIV, or HBV, should continue all professional practices for which they are qualified with rigorous adherence to Universal Precautions/Standard Precautions and the facility Infection Control Policies. It is required that any such infected health care worker be systematically and objectively monitored to insure ability to practice his profession without risk to patients or staff.

Restrictions on the performance of regular duties will be applied only when deemed medically justified based on a risk of affecting others as outlined below:

Restrictions of duties can occur under the following conditions as judged by a physician:

1. Illness that may interfere with physical and mental competence
2. Illness which can be readily communicable to a patient
3. The presence of exudative or weeping lesions of skin or mucous membranes
4. Functional inability to perform assigned tasks or regular duties.
5. Noncompliance with established guidelines**,** such as Infection Control or Exposure Control Policies for prevention of disease.

Frequency of monitoring will be annual. Monitoring will become more frequent as objective changes in the physical and mental condition of the health care worker suggest any deterioration of his condition. This will be at the discretion of the health care worker's physician in conjunction with the Medical Director, the Superintendent, the Director of Nursing, and Infection Control Personnel of this institution.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of the health care worker's disease state must be maintained in accordance with state law. Only those individuals who need to monitor the health care worker's medical condition, such as his physician, should know of the condition without expressed written permission for disclosure by the infected health care worker.

When a patient has been clearly exposed to a health care worker's blood or other infectious body fluid, the health care worker has an ethical responsibility to disclose the health status when it is critical to patient care.

NOTE: State and local laws governing employee rights with regard to disclosure of health HIV status, even after a patient exposure should be explicitly referenced here as appropriate.

Management

Decisions concerning the ability of an infected employee to perform his job in a competent and professional manner are medical and must be made by a physician. The physician bears an ethical responsibility not only to the health care worker but also to those seeking services from the health care worker.

At the time of a significant exposure to blood or potentially infectious fluid between a health care worker and a patient, the institution has the responsibility to protect both and may need access to the patient's or the health care worker's infection status. This can only be done with their express consent.

The health care worker also bears a professional responsibility for providing quality patient care. Accordingly, disclosure to the institution of the health care worker's infection status must be forthcoming from the health care worker or, if not by the individual, from the health care worker's physician when:

* It is medically required to care for an exposed patient.
* The disease status has progressed to a stage that could adversely affect the health care worker's professional performance.

This however, requires the express consent of the health care worker. Similarly, a patient who may have exposed a health care worker to a serious blood borne disease cannot be tested for the presence of infection without consent. In cases where a diagnosis exists in the medical record, such information can be used in determining a course of action for the exposed health care worker. If such evidence is not already available, and an invasive procedure would be required to obtain samples for testing, the patient/guardian or legal representative must consent.