September 16, 2014

To all BUSM students:

Boston University School of Medicine maintains a safe and healthy workplace for all who could potentially be exposed to blood or “other potentially infectious materials” (OPIM). Both the laboratories and clinical services emphasize safe practices and the prevention of exposure to potentially infectious materials. Standard precautions are followed for all patients. Standard precautions are used to perform any task or procedure which could result in the contamination of skin or clothing with blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions (except sweat), or other potentially infectious material, regardless of whether or not they contain visible blood. Standard Precautions include Hand Hygiene, Eye and Face Protection, Use of Gowns and Gloves, and Sharps Management. Additional “Transmission Based Precautions” are used in addition to standard precautions for patients with known or suspected infection or colonization with highly transmissible or epidemiologically important pathogens.

Universal precautions are to be observed to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, and ALL body fluids are considered potentially infectious materials. All students are responsible for their personal safety and the safety of their teammates. Students should follow safe practices when handling sharps. Students must use appropriate personal protective equipment such as, but not limited to, gloves, gowns, laboratory coats, face shields or masks and eye protection, and mouthpieces, resuscitation bags, pocket masks, or other ventilation devices.

**Post-exposure Procedure:** In the event of a needle stick or any unprotected exposure to blood, bloody body fluids, or OPIM, it is extremely important to receive counseling regarding the risk of acquiring a communicable disease. If indicated, prophylaxis should be started right away, usually within one hour. Therefore, if you have a needle stick or other unprotected exposure you should do the following:

1. Wash the exposed area and perform basic first aid
2. Notify your supervisor
3. Get evaluated immediately
4. Go to Occupational and Environmental Medicine (DOB 7; On-Call Beeper 3580) during working hours or the Harrison Avenue Emergency Department after hours and on weekends
5. Tell the receptionist you have had an unprotected exposure (needle stick), and you will be fast-tracked into the clinic.
6. A counselor will discuss post-exposure prophylaxis with you
7. DO NOT DELAY!
Occupational and Environmental Medicine should notify the Office of Student Affairs of the exposure the same day, if during working hours, or the next work day if after hours, or weekends, and we will follow up with you. This notification process is not without flaws, so please contact an OSA dean, if an OSA dean has not checked in with you. These situations can be very stressful and we are here to help.

Coverage for provided services is included in the Aetna student health insurance plan offered by the University. In the event that you do not have Boston University School of Medicine health insurance (Aetna), you must contact your carrier and determine the level of services covered. Submit any billing received to your insurance company. The OSA will provide reimbursement for out-of-pocket co-pays. We strongly encourage you to keep your health insurance card in your wallet at all times.

For questions regarding this policy please contact Dr. John Polk, the Assistant Dean in charge of post-exposure management, in the Office of Student Affairs (617-638-4166), or Dr Angela Jackson, Associate Dean of Student Affairs.