



Ambulatory Clinic Policy and Procedure

<p>Title: PLAN TO MANAGE THE INFLUX OF POTENTIALLY INFECTIOUS PATIENTS</p>	<p>Policy Number: EP 7.23</p>
<p>Regulation Reference: Joint Commission, CDC</p>	<p>Effective Date: 5/2017</p>

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) to provide a healthy and safe environment for patients, visitors, and staff. This plan describes the approach to initial and ongoing management of an influx of potentially infectious patients.

Scope and Distribution:

This policy applies and will be distributed to all Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso clinics.

Procedure:

1. Rapid identification of patients with possible communicable diseases during triage or upon arrival is the goal, therefore they can be appropriately isolated in order to protect other patients and staff.
2. During triage if patient reports or has visible signs and symptoms that can be associated with a potential communicable disease (e.g. draining open sores/wounds, coughing up blood), the responsible person should contact a nurse/specialist staff immediately.
3. Known or suspected infectious individuals should be isolated in a private exam room with the door closed until further information is obtained by clinical staff (e.g. MRSA, TB, Varicella).
4. If there is a delay in taking patient to an exam room, encourage coughing individuals to sit at least three feet away from others in common waiting areas. Tissues and hand sanitizer/hand washing station should be made available to patients, visitors and family members.
5. Individuals with signs and symptoms of a respiratory infection (coughing, sneezing and possible nasal congestion) should be instructed to cover the nose/mouth when coughing or sneezing. Tissues should be used to contain respiratory secretions and disposed of in the nearest waste receptacle after use, clinic staff may ask the patient to wear a mask.
6. Hand hygiene should be performed after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.
7. Immuno-compromised patients should be placed in an exam room as soon as possible.
8. During health alerts/emerging diseases outbreaks (e.g. Ebola, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome etc.). TTUHSC El Paso leadership/Infection Control Committee will create a screening/data collection tool based on recommendations provided by Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Texas Department of State Health Services/Emergency Management System or other agencies as appropriate to determine the specific nature and extend of the infectious matter. Screening tool could include the following information but not limited:
 - a. Target travel history questionnaire.
 - b. Target signs and symptoms of infectious disease.
 - c. Target population.
9. Based on information and recommendations given from these agencies, the scope and depth of the organization’s planned response will be determined and appropriate measures will be implemented including:



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- a. Location at which infectious patients will be received and treated (e.g. on-site or off-site).
 - b. Relocation of non-infectious patients from areas anticipated to receive incoming infectious patients. If necessary, a clinic should be cleared on non-infectious patients and designated as the admission unit for patients presenting to the organization with an infectious process.
 - c. Designation of physicians and staff which will evaluate and treat infectious patients.
 - d. Determination of supplies and equipment needed.
10. Consideration should be given to the impact of the infectious process on the community where the patient will be discharged to determine if additional precautions or services are warranted.
11. In addition to the healthcare provider asking questions to the patient, TTUHSC El Paso leadership/Infection Control Committee should consider posting visual alerts (signs, posters) at the entrance and in strategic places (waiting areas, elevators) to provide patients with clear instructions.
12. The need to maintain appropriate infection control precautions will be paramount during this type of emergency. Staff should be informed of the following by organizational leadership before assuming responsibility for providing care during an emergency:
- a. The specific nature of the infectious process.
 - b. The mode of transmission.
 - c. The clinical manifestation.
 - d. Any precautions that need to be implemented to prevent cross-contamination.
 - e. The procedure for use and disposal of appropriate protective equipment.
13. Debriefings shall be conducted by leadership/Infection Control Committee as appropriate until the situation is resolve.

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Signatory approval on file by: Juan Figueroa, M.D. Director of Clinical Operations Clinic Operations Committee, Chair Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso	