Center for Health Sciences
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EXPOSURE TO BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS

Be advised of the following information regarding a potential career in dental hygiene:

Dental hygiene procedures are done in a septic environment that poses significant hazards to dental personnel and clients. Over the last several decades the problems have gradually become more complex. Dental personnel are exposed to a wide range of microorganisms in the blood and saliva of patients they treat. Infections may be transmitted in dental practice by blood or saliva through direct contact, droplets, splatter, or aerosols. Indirect contact contamination or infection by contaminated instruments is possible and, as a result, patients and dental health care workers (DHCW) have the potential of transmitting infections to each other. The use of equipment that produces aerosols of saliva, blood and plaque has increased (high-speed hand pieces, piezoelectric scalers, ultrasonic scalers, air/water syringes).

The number of clients seen by dental hygienists has increased, as has the number of clients carrying life-threatening communicable diseases. Dental clients and DHCWs may be exposed to a variety of microorganisms via blood or oral or respiratory secretions. These microorganisms may include cytomegalovirus, hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV), herpes simples virus type 1 and 2, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), Mycobacterium tuberculosis, staphylococci, streptococci, and other viruses and bacteria, specifically, those that infect the upper respiratory tract. Infections may be transmitted in the dental treatment room through several routes, including direct contact with blood, oral fluids, or other secretions; indirect contact with contaminated instruments, treatment room equipment, or environmental surfaces; or contact with airborne contaminants present in either droplet splatter, aerosols, or oral and respiratory fluids.

Applicant Name (print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____