

Topic: Criminal Background Checks

Objective: Why do you need a criminal background check in health care?

The **Health Care Worker Background Check Act** requires health care employers in Illinois to conduct a criminal background check on certain applicants for health care positions hired on or after January 1, 1996. All health care workers such as home health care aides, nurse assistants, personal care assistants, students, or any individual working in a health related occupation are required to have a background check. The Health Care Worker Background Check Act protects patients who are most at risk; the sick, the elderly, disabled individuals, psychiatric patients, etc. from employees or students who have access to a patient's living quarters, financial, medical, or personal records.

When you are a student at the College of Lake County seeking to enroll in a designated health career program or classes requiring a clinical placement, you are required to have a criminal background check. This process is to determine if you have ever been convicted of any criminal or drug offenses, as specified in the Health Care Worker Background Check Act. The Act includes over fifty generally serious offenses which would potentially disqualify an employee or student, including first and second degree murder, assault, battery, theft, robbery, arson, unlawful use of a weapon, and manufacturing or trafficking drugs.

As a potential student, you must authorize the college to perform a background check. You must fill out an "Authorization of Understanding" (consent) and include a valid social security number, in order for the background check to be processed. Once the form is completed, you will submit the completed authorization for the background check to the Health Programs Support Specialist at the College of Lake County. The forms are usually given to students at their program orientation or on the first day of class. You may also have a background check completed at anytime by making arrangements with the Health Programs Support Specialist. The cost of the background check is ten dollars, and the results are available within 24 to 48 hours. Depending on which program or class you are enrolled in, determines whether you are required to pay for the background check first or if it is included in your tuition and fees. All background checks are valid for one year and may need to be updated, depending on the health career program you are enrolled in.

Once the results of the background check are received, the Health Programs Support Specialist will review the information. If you have been convicted of committing a crime or attempting to commit certain crimes which are specified in the act, you may be ineligible for designated health programs. Students who have committed an offense that prohibits them from being hired by a health care employer or completing a clinical assignment can obtain a waiver from the Illinois Department of Public Health to continue in their designated program.

Topic: Urine Drug Screening

Objective: Why are Urine Drug Screenings required in health care?

Since 2006, students are required to follow the policies of the College and clinical agencies which allow students to participate in clinical experiences, and have a Urine Drug Screen performed. A urine drug screen is a technical examination of urine to determine the presence or absence of specified substances. The urine drug screen is a 9 to 10 panel test which covers the testing for substances such as: marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates (heroin), methadone, and barbiturates. As a student working in the health care environment, a urine drug screen is just as important as a criminal background check, and is

needed so that you, as a student do not pose unreasonable risk to the safety of your patients or employees during a clinical assignment.

The urine drug screens are usually conducted on campus during orientation sessions with the various health careers programs. The cost of the drug screen is \$30 payable at the cashier's office at the College of Lake County. Students will pay for the drug screen first and then report to the orientation session for the test. Representatives from Condell Medical Center and the Health Programs Specialist will be available to assist students through this process. The students will fill out forms from Condell Medical Center and an Acknowledgement of Understanding from the College of Lake County and present a valid picture ID. The specimen will be collected and sent to the testing laboratory, and completed in accordance with the United States Department of Health and Human Services guidelines. Condell Medical Center will conduct the test and analyze the results. When the results are available, the student, the Health Center, and the appropriate health career department are notified. All urine drug screens are valid for one year, and may need to be updated depending on which health career program you are enrolled in.

If in the event a student does not pass the urine drug screen, you can complete another test at your own expense and undergo more extensive testing. You will have the opportunity to refute the test, however, if the test remains positive or illegal substances that are not a medical necessity, are present, the student will not be able to enter the health career program at that time.

If at any time you have questions about the criminal background check or the urine drug screening, you are encouraged to contact the Biological and Health Sciences Division or Health Programs Support Specialist. There are resources at the College of Lake County which are available to students concerning these requirements; the staff and faculty are available to ensure your continued success in your academic endeavors.

Topic: Immunizations

Objective: Why are immunizations required for health career programs?

Your health is an important part of being a student at the College of Lake County and one of the first assignments you have as a health career student is to comply with Illinois State and local health regulations. Immunizations are a very important component of your health and for the safety of others you come in to contact with. All students who are enrolled in health career programs at the college must complete certain health requirements. In order to do this, you must communicate with the Health Center at the College of Lake County before any clinical assignment. The Health Center reviews all health information, provides low cost immunizations, and clears students for clinical experiences. Once you are cleared from the Health Center, you are given a "Health Passport" and are allowed to participate in clinical activities until a specified time.

The types of immunizations required vary, based on the health program you are enrolled in. All health programs at the college require a **Tuberculosis (TB)** test. TB was once considered a disease of the past, but this is no longer the case. The disease is communicable and a deadly respiratory disease, with no working vaccine available at this time. Many people can come into contact without ever knowing it, and since the disease is easily transmittable, it is important to be tested. The "two step Mantoux TB skin test" checks to see if you have been exposed to the disease and don't know it. If your initial skin test is negative, the test will be repeated one week later to see if your immune system has been triggered or sensitized. If you test negative again the second time, you will just need to update your TB test annually. In the event that either the first or second test is positive, you will be sent to the Lake County Tuberculosis Clinic in Waukegan. A chest X-ray will be performed and checked for presence of the

disease. If necessary, you may be given medication and during that course of treatment, you should be protected from the disease.

Not all health programs require a **Varicella Titre** (chicken pox), which is a blood test to show immunity to chicken pox. If you do not have immunity, you will be required to have a 2 shot series, and you will have to plan your dates according to the vaccination schedule. **Measles (Rubeola)** is another vaccination which may or may not be required. You must be able to show evidence of immunity to measles by have a blood test. A vaccination may be required to achieve immunity. **Mumps** requires that you show evidence of immunity by having a titre drawn, and again, a booster can be given to achieve immunity. Some health careers programs require more immunizations than others. **Hepatitis A, B, and C** may be necessary, for example Hepatitis B is four times more infectious than HIV and Hepatitis B can be prevented. Hepatitis C requires blood titre, and is a major cause of this infection, in which there is no current vaccination available.

A **Tetanus (Td)** immunization is required for all health careers programs. If you have an uncertain history of your primary (first) vaccination series, you will probably need to become vaccinated again. You must show proof that you had an immunization within the past 10 years. The Health Center will review any records related to immunizations, and make a determination.

The Health Center at the College of Lake County provides any immunizations you may require for your health career program at a very low cost to you. Many of the immunizations are free or are offered at a reduced cost. You are not required to bring money with you to pay for their services; they can be added to your student bill or pre-paid. The Health Center will keep a copy of your health record and all records and visits are considered confidential. Copies of your health record can be obtained per written request. If you are working with your own physician, please remember that you will have to visit the Health Center and have the nurse review your information, and sign a clearance for you to participate in clinical assignments.

The information presented to you may seem like a lot to take in at one time, but keep in mind that the college is supportive of its students. If at any time you do not understand any of the health requirements, background checks, or drug screens, please ask questions. Many staff and faculty members at the college are familiar with the various requirements, and can provide guidance in completing them successfully.

Resources

Illinois Department of Public Health: <http://www.idph.state.il.us/>

College of Lake County: <http://www.clcillinois.edu/programs/health/>

Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/>

Important Contacts:

Academic Advising Office: (847) 543-2060

Biological and Health Sciences Division Office: (847) 543-2042

Health Programs Support Specialist: (847) 543-2325

Health Center: (847) 543-20