Empowering Students to Manage their Health Abroad: Three Institutional Approaches

The Forum on Education Abroad
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Andrea Drake, Director of International Health, Safety, and Security
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Jason Hope, Director of International Health, Safety, and Security
University of Kentucky

Patrick Morgan, Senior Advisor for International Health, Safety, and Security
University of Michigan
Today’s Agenda

- Data from Health Disclosure Process Survey
- Overview of approaches
  - University of Massachusetts Amherst
  - University of Kentucky
  - University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
- Round Table
Overview of Self-Disclosure Survey

- Audience (OSAC Academic Working Group and Pulse)
- Administered December 2016 and open for 1 month
- 85 responses
Do you have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information?

85 responses

- Yes: 87.1%
- No: 12.9%
Who are these 11 who do not have a self-disclosure process?

- 26% of Private Colleges or Universities (9 of 34) do not have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.
- 5% of Public Colleges or Universities (2 of 42) do not have a process.
- 0% of providers (0 of 7) do not have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.

**Takeaway**: Public institutions and providers are more likely to have a process.
Count of Undergraduate Enrollment by Health Form Process

- 92% of institutions (36 of 39) with an undergraduate student enrollment of 15,000 or above have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.
- 79% of institutions (30 of 38) with an undergraduate student enrollment of 14,999 and below have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.

**Takeaway**: Larger institutions are more likely to have a process.
Count of Graduate Enrollment by Health Form Process

- 93% of institutions (14 of 15) without graduate students have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.
- 87% of institutions (55 of 63) with a graduate student enrollment of 14,999 and below have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.
- 71% of institutions (5 of 7) with graduate enrollment of 15,000 or above have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.

**Takeaway:** Institutions with less graduate students are more likely to have a process.
Recap of Likelihood of having a Disclosure Process

• Public Colleges or Universities and are more likely than Private Institutions to have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.
• Private institutions with a proportionately large graduate student enrollment are less likely to have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.
• Institutions with a large undergraduate student population are much more likely to have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.
• All providers have a process by which a traveler is encouraged to disclose health information.
For which types of travelers do you have a health disclosure process?

- Undergraduate Students (86.9%)
- Graduate Students (45.2%)
- Faculty and Staff (8.3%)
- University Sponsored Participant (10.7%)
- None (10.7%)
- Other (11.9%)
For what types of experience/s do you have a voluntary health disclosure process?

81 responses

- Other (11.1%)
- Academic / Not for Credit (37%)
- None (24.7%)
- Alumni Experience (6.2%)
- Research (23.5%)
- Volunteer / Community Service (32.1%)
- Internships (33.3%)
- Conferences / Professional (17.3%)
- Competitions (18.5%)
- Academic / For Credit (67.9%)
For what types of experience/s is the health disclosure process mandatory (versus a voluntary process)?

84 responses

- Academic / Not for Credit (14.3%)
- Internships (33.3%)
- Volunteer / Community Service (14.3%)
- Competitions (7.1%)
- Conferences / Professional (7.1%)
- Research (9.5%)
- Alumni Experience (3.6%)
- None (36.9%)
- Other (10.7%)
- Academic / For Credit (58.3%)
Who at your institution is responsible for administering the health disclosure process?
85 responses

- A centralized study abroad office (68.2%)
- Several units within the same institution (12.9%)
- University health services or equivalent (9.4%)
- We do not administer a health disclosure process (10.6%)
- Other (12.9%)
Who at your institution has access to the health information that has been disclosed?

83 responses

- Other (32.5%)
- University health services or equivalent (8.2%)
- Several units within the same institution (19.3%)
- A centralized study abroad office (60.2%)
- We do not collect health information in a centralized place, but rather encourage travelers to disclose information as they see fit (16.9%)
Which of the following are included in your institution's health disclosure process?

84 responses

- A set of health-related questions (78.6%)
- A set of instructions describing the health disclosure process (66.7%)
- A document that the traveler takes to his or her health care provider (34.5%)
- A verification form (15.5%)
- We do not administer a health disclosure process (11.9%)
- Other (8.3%)
Who is the health information shared with in emergency situations?

Most Common:

- Study abroad office
- Faculty/program leaders
- Insurance provider

Also, other places...

- Parents/guardians
- Assistance providers
Who is the health information shared with in **non-emergency** situations?

Why would information be shared in non-emergency situations?

- Pre-travel preparation

Several universities are *not* collecting any health information
When traveler permission is needed to share health information, how is permission obtained?

- Permission is requested on every health form pre-departure: 47%
- Permission is collected in writing, such as in an email, on an as-needed basis: 26%
- Verbal permission is requested, such as over the phone, on an as-needed basis: 27%
How does your institution utilize a health disclosure process?

Pre-departure

Other uses include:

● Checking to make sure the medication is legal in host country

● Travelers who meet certain criteria must take the completed form to a medical professional

- The study abroad office (or equivalent) discusses health management strategies with the student
- Our institution shares the information with program/faculty leaders
- Travelers are encouraged to self-disclose the information with program/faculty leaders
- Travelers are encouraged to disclose their health information to on-site partners
- Determine if the traveler is able to participate in a certain international experience
How does your institution utilize a health disclosure process?

While abroad, we consult the health form...

- Who has access to this information while students are abroad?
When is the health information collected?

83 responses

- Vast majority are collecting information after program has been selected, pre-departure
- Disclosure as travel preparation, not for exclusion
What challenges exist for collecting and using health information at your institution?

- Being clear that participants are responsible for their health, even if...
- Determining who to share the information with
- Storing the information in a secure manner
- We are worried about having medical information we may not need
- Being able to limit data access to select staff
- Destroying the information after it is not needed
- We are worried about having medical information that we may not be...
- We are worried about discriminating based on health
- Non-medical staff are worried about making medical decisions

- So many valid concerns
- Being clear that students are responsible for their own health is the biggest challenge
What benefits exist for collecting and using health information at your institution?

- Can’t always rely on host program or institution
- Can’t expect same services abroad as at home
What types of information do you ask travelers to provide?
Does your health disclosure process **require travelers** to meet with a medical care provider before departure?

- How to enforce this?
- Advantages for all travelers?
Does your health disclosure process require a travel authorization form or letter of support from the traveler’s medical care provider?

- Again, how do you enforce this?
- Staffing capacity/volume of travelers
If applicable, in what cases is the traveler required to have a specific form completed by a health care professional, such as a travel authorization form or a letter from the provider detailing the traveler's ability to travel as it relates to health?

- Who is making this determination?
How would you change your health preparation/disclosure process, if at all?

**Common Themes:**

- Emphasize Prescription Medications
- Emphasize Mental Health
- Move to Pre-Acceptance
- No Changes Needed
- Better Respect Student Privacy
- Move to Post-Acceptance
- Capture More Travelers
- Shift toward Guided Student Reflection
- Collect More Details
- Collect Fewer Details
- I Just Wish We Had a Process!
- Remove EA from Decision Making/Shift to UHS
- Employ Better Technology
- Review/Update the Form or Process
- Tighten Up Process/Require Physician Input
How satisfied are you with your health disclosure process?

- Surprising number of mostly and very satisfied!
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Health Disclosure Process

- Self-disclosed process
- Student directed
- Partnership with University Health Services (UHS) Travel Clinic and the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH)
In extreme cases, students are asked to submit the completed plan, signed by their doctor, to IPO.
Health Disclosure Process

Health Evaluation Form Sample Questions

- Please list any medical concerns for which you have been (or are currently being) treated.
- How are you planning to take care of any medical concerns while you are abroad?
- Please list any psychiatric concerns for which you have been (or are currently being) treated.
- How will you manage your mental health while you are abroad?

Questions asked of ALL participants. Thinking about health abroad applies to everyone!
Health Disclosure Process

Pros
- Very thorough process, we feel students are getting good help pre-departure
- Student directed
- Learning a lot about our student population
- Better understanding the kinds of physical and mental health issues we need to be aware of for education abroad

Cons
- Time Consuming
- Assuming a certain level of responsibility
- Reliance on partnership--staff could change
- Students not taking responsibility for themselves
- Self disclosure not always accurate
Managing my Health Abroad, Signed Agreement

I have completed my Health Evaluation questionnaire and understand that any follow up on managing my health abroad is my responsibility.

If I am taking prescription medications, I understand that I am responsible for learning whether any prescription medications I take abroad are legal and/or available in my host country.

If I am taking prescription medications, I understand that I must get a travel waiver from my insurance company to allow adequate supply of medication abroad.

I am responsible for obtaining any/all the required immunizations for my destination. Please see the Center for Disease Control website for more information.

I am responsible for creating a plan to manage any medical and/or mental health conditions (i.e. asthma, allergies, anxiety, depression) while abroad.

I understand that the UMass Travel Clinic in University Health Services offers appointments to students going abroad to review health information about my destination (including required immunizations and potential prescription medication issues).

I understand it is my responsibility to make an appointment at either the UMass Travel Clinic, another travel clinic, my...
“I give the Director of Education Abroad of the University of Massachusetts Amherst (or his/her designee) and my program director permission to communicate with each other and my parents, guardians, other emergency contact person, my health care providers and appropriate University authorities regarding all issues surrounding my education-abroad experience. This may include but is not limited to student account information, student conduct issues, health and safety, or academics; such contact may occur before, during, or after the program.”

“In the event of any emergency during the time that I am a participant in the program (for example, if I should suffer any physical injury or other threat to my mental or physical well-being), I hereby give permission to representatives of the University of Massachusetts and this program to notify my emergency contact persons of my whereabouts and/or my condition:”

“I understand that while I am enrolled in a University of Massachusetts Education Abroad Program a sickness or accident requiring routine or emergency medical or surgical treatment may arise. I hereby grant permission for my submission to emergency medical care, including anesthetic, blood transfusion and surgery, during the period of the Program, as recommended by medical authorities.”
Student accepted to program

Student completes ‘self disclosure form’

DRC and Counseling Center students flagged

Remainder of information used as advising tool and record

External contact by Disability Resource Center (DRC)

External contact by Counseling Center
University of Kentucky - 1

Health Disclosure Process before 2018

Information Collected in Form:

Are you working with Disability Resource Center?
  Answering ‘yes’ triggers DRC involvement
Are you working with Counseling Center?
  Answering ‘yes’ triggers Counseling Center involvement
Do you have any physical health conditions that may affect your participation?
Do you have any mental health conditions that may affect your participation?
Do you have any disabilities that may affect your participation?
Do you have any other conditions that may affect your participation?
Are you taking any medications? If so, please list them.
Do you have any allergies? If so, please list them.
Please provide a contact that we can reach out to in case of a healthcare emergency abroad.
Health Disclosure Process

A Process in Transition…

Concerns:

What are we doing with all this information? What if we miss something?

Advisors aren’t healthcare professionals

There is too much ambiguity in the process

No capacity for in-depth relationships with University Health Services

Advice from our Legal Counsel & discrimination concerns
Moving Toward “Mindful Preparation”

Coming Changes:

- Emphasis on yes/no questions to remove ambiguity
- Answering “yes” triggers automatic external office involvement
- Additional process with Community of Concern/Student Affairs
- Embedding guided reflection within the form itself
  (e.g., “Are you currently being treated for a physical health condition? If so, have you made arrangements for continued care abroad? We encourage you to let your physician or healthcare provider know about your travel plans.”)
- Retaining information on allergies & medications
- Removal of process for non-credit registrations (but info still included in online orientation)
  Often submitted immediately before departure (if we can’t use the information to help anyone, we don’t want to keep it on file)
New Questions* for Automatic Triggers:

1. “Are you currently being treated, or have you been treated within the last 5 years, for a physical health condition, injury or disease?”
   a. “Yes” answer triggers notification to Disability Resource Center

2. “Are you currently being treated, or have you been treated within the last 5 years, for a mental health condition?
   a. “Yes” answer triggers notification to Counseling Center

3. “Do you have any health condition or disability that may affect your ability to fully participate on an Education Abroad program?
   a. “Yes” answer triggers notification to Disability Resource Center

*Questions taken from University of Pennsylvania process!
1. Application

2. Travel Health Preparation Guide is deployed in Terra Dotta to All Students

3. Acceptance and confirmation

4. Student answers “Yes” and “No” questions in the health inventory
   - Physical Health?
   - Mental Health?
   - Disabilities?
   - Medications?
   - Allergies?
   - Note: Confidentiality Audits

5. Two possible process elements are deployed if the Student checks “Yes” to certain questions:
   1) SSD Visa Form, and/or
   2) The Travel Health Preparation Guide verification signature document
2. COMPLETING THE GUIDE REQUIREMENT

Auto-mated email instructs student to take Travel Health Preparation Guide plan to health care provider via auto-email in Terra Dotta system.

Student completes the Travel Health Preparation Guide with health care provider:
- University Health Service
- Counseling and Psychological Services
- Services for Students with Disabilities
- Other

Signature document where student affirms that they have discussed the Travel Health Preparation Guide.
3. USING THE HEALTH PREPARATION GUIDE

Student does NOT submit a form with medical information to the study abroad office.

- Student is encouraged to share the plan with program leaders, on-site staff, or with other persons as they deem appropriate.
- Student is encouraged to withdraw her or himself from their international experience if they do not believe they can manage their health care needs while abroad.

The student goes abroad.

Travel Health Preparation Guide: [Link to Travel Health Preparation Guide]
Travel Health Preparation Guide

This guide is designed to help you identify and plan for your health and wellbeing during travel, with a particular focus on how health conditions or disabilities that are managed in the U.S. health-care context may change or be more challenging in an off-campus or international setting.

Whether you are traveling domestically or abroad, answering the questions in this guide will assist you in proactively addressing potential health challenges such as securing appropriate on-site treatment services, obtaining prescription and over-the-counter medications, understanding controlled substance regulations from state to state or in foreign countries, researching customs requirements for medications and/or medical devices, and preparing for emergencies.

Student Instructions:

☐ Answer the questions within this guide.
☐ Research strategies to manage your health in your specific travel destination/s.
☐ Consult with your current psychological and/or physical health care provider or University Health Service/Counseling (UHS) and Psychological Services (CAPS) professional. If needed, work together to develop a self-care plan for your off-campus experience. Please make appointments at CAPS or UHS as early as possible since they fill up quickly during peak travel periods.
☐ Keep an electronic or printed copy of your completed guide with you during travel for easy reference.
☐ Disclose health conditions to a travel companion, onsite staff member, or program leader (if applicable) if it will make you feel safer or help you in case of emergency. Common examples include sharing information about emergency medications or life-threatening allergic reactions.
Consider the following questions about your health and wellbeing:

1. **Everyone is impacted by travel.** In terms of your emotional wellbeing, these questions can help you prepare: What are you expecting to do during your trip? What are you expecting to learn and how might the travel experience change you? What are you most excited about? What are you most anxious/fearful about? What experiences may be most challenging for you (e.g., culture, interpersonal situations, etc.)?

2. **Physical Health.** Are you currently being treated, or have you been treated for a serious physical health condition injury or disease within the last five years? If yes, what do you do in the U.S. to care for these conditions (e.g., medication, seeing a health professional, personal networks, other strategies)? Do you need a prescription for medications that you might take during a flare and will you be able to replicate this treatment while traveling?

3. **Physical Health Needs During Travel.** What do you need in order to successfully manage your physical health conditions during your travel experience? What concrete steps will you take to address these needs? Do you need to consult with a health care professional or take medications at your destination?

4. **Mental Health.** Are you currently being treated, or have you been treated during the last 5 years for a mental health condition (e.g., addiction, depression, anxiety, eating disorder, a condition related to loss or grief)? If yes, what do you do on campus to care for these conditions (e.g., medication, seeing a health professional, personal networks, other strategies)?

5. **Mental Health Needs During Travel.** What do you need in order to successfully manage your mental health and wellbeing during your travel experience? What concrete steps will you take to address these needs? Do you need to consult with a mental health professional at your destination? How would this condition be treated during an acute flair and will you be able to replicate this treatment while traveling?
Changes from the Previous Health Form

- All students will have access to the Travel Health Preparation Guide in the pre-decision phase and on Global Michigan, with the hopes of prompting students to make their appointments at UHS or CAPS early, since they fill up.
- The Health Inventory in Terra Dotta is limited to Yes and No questions. It collects no sensitive medical information. There are targeted emails for students who answered “Yes” to these questions.
- No medical information is collected by an international education office.
- Verification process is self-reported.
- Instructions for completing the guide with a medical professional.
- Instructions for sharing the guide.
Process for changing the Health form Process

• Meetings with key stakeholders: General Council, University Health Services, Counseling and Psychological Services, Services for Students with Disabilities, Dean of Students, and education abroad offices.

• Two open Q&A forums with the U-M Education Abroad offices with panelists
• Revision teams with Education Abroad Units
• Launch in September 2016
• Revisited process Fall 2017
Contact Info

Andrea Drake  
andreadrake@ipo.umass.edu
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Jason Hope  
jasonhope@uky.edu
University of Kentucky

Patrick Morgan  
morganpt@umich.edu
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor