

## **Health & Counseling Services Policy on Management of Health-Related Absences**

The primary role of Health & Counseling Services at Anna Maria College is to provide students with preventative medical care, short-term counseling, triage assessment of mental health and medical issues, treatment for minor illnesses and or injury, and coordination of care beyond the services provided on-campus. One of the important ways we support students is by providing guidance on health and wellness appointments.

### **Student Responsibility**

It is the student's responsibility to meet the academic requirements of their courses. Absence from classes should be a rare event. If a circumstance arises necessitating missed class time, students should notify their faculty as soon as possible, and seek arrangements in order to fulfill the requirements of the course (example: zoom or virtual classes when feasible; rescheduling papers, exams, presentations).

Most visits to Health & Counseling Services are non-urgent and should be scheduled during non-class time. When a student has a mental health or medical issue that either prevents them from fully participating in class, or potentially puts other community members at risk (for example, concern for an infectious illness) a visit to Health & Counseling may take priority to class time. Students should recognize that this does not change their responsibilities for the course, and such an absence may not qualify as "excused."

The same guidance applies to routine off-campus appointments such as dental cleanings, annual physicals, or follow-up appointments for chronic issues.

### **Health Services and Counseling Visit Note Policy**

Health and Counseling Services does not provide notes for missed class or work time due to visits to our office. This policy is consistent with American College Health Association recommendations and our peer institutions and serves to encourage students to schedule routine care around their academic commitments.

If a student is seen and determined to have a medical issue for which absence from class is recommended as part of treatment (e.g. infectious illness, concussion) a note may be provided to the student advising of this recommendation, as well as expected return date or conditions.

Health and Counseling Services is not responsible for determining whether an absence per medical recommendation constitutes an "excused" absence. The determination of what constitutes an "excused" absence from class rests with the instructor and may vary based on the nature of individual courses and academic requirements (example: nursing absences per nursing student handbook).

**IMPORTANT:** Due to privacy laws, medical information requires written consent from the student before being disclosed to Academic Affairs and/or Faculty. Information about medical conditions or specific reasons for absence, as well as explanations about visits to Health and Counseling Services should never be expected. At times, Health and Counseling Services may provide a student written information about their health condition and management recommendations, which the student may then share at their discretion.

In the event of urgent visits or mental health crisis management, students may request a note that confirms the date and time they were seen for an appointment. It is the student's discretion how they disclose that information.

### **Records of Healthcare Visits off Campus**

To ensure that student Health & Counseling records remain current, students are encouraged to submit documentation of off-campus healthcare visits.

The Health & Counseling Services office does NOT provide notification to Academic Affairs or Faculty for absences of three (3) consecutive weekdays or less. It is the students' responsibility to inform their instructors and provide documentation, if required.

When a student provides documentation to Health & Counseling Services for a medical or mental health related absence lasting longer than three (3) consecutive weekdays (e.g. surgery, hospitalization) Health & Counseling Services will formally notify Academic Affairs to provide confirmation of extended absence. This is to assist in facilitating academic support as needed for students during the extended absence. For these notifications, Health and Counseling providers will verify identified providers are in active practice with the associated clinic identified on medical documents.

In all cases where an extended healthcare absence is planned or anticipated, students should make every effort to notify instructors ahead of time and be proactive in preparing for their absence to ensure academic success.

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