



Office For Student Development/Dean of Students

September 10, 2003

Dear Student (Student's Parent or Guardian):

As the college health service director at Kingsborough Community College, I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis, and a new law in New York State. On July 22, 2003, Governor Pataki signed New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) §2167 requiring institutions, including colleges and universities, to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all students meeting the enrollment criteria, whether they live on or off campus. This law became effective on August 15, 2003 (prior to the Fall 2003 semester).

Kingsborough Community College is required to maintain a record of the following for each student:

- A response to receipt of meningococcal disease and vaccine information signed by the student or if a student is under the age of 18, by the student's parent or guardian. The information provided to you must include information on the availability and cost of meningococcal meningitis vaccine (Menomune™); AND EITHER
- A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization within the past 10 years; OR
- An acknowledgement of meningococcal disease risks and refusal of meningococcal meningitis immunization signed by the student or if a student is under the age of 18, by the student's parent or guardian.

Meningitis is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. If not treated early, meningitis can lead to swelling of the fluid surrounding the brain and spinal column as well as severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation and even death.

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Cases of meningitis among teens and young adults 15 to 24 years of age (the age of most college students) have more than doubled since 1991. The disease strikes about 3,000 Americans each year and claims about 300 lives. Between 100 and 125 meningitis cases occur on college campuses and as many as 15 students will die from the disease.

A vaccine is available that protects against four types of the bacteria that cause meningitis in the United States — types A, C, Y and W-135. These types account for nearly two thirds of meningitis cases among college students. Since Kingsborough Community College does not provide meningococcal immunization services, students who would like to receive the vaccine should consult with their primary care physician, a traveler's clinic or one of the sites listed at WWW.KINGSBOROUGH.EDU (Select menu item, "Student Services" and choose "Health Services" , then click "Resources".) The cost of the vaccine varies, but prices quoted have ranged from \$29.00 - \$75.00 and above.

I encourage you and your child to carefully review the enclosed materials. **Please complete the Meningococcal Meningitis Response Form and return it within two weeks of receipt of this letter in the enclosed pink envelope addressed to the Office of Health Services at Kingsborough Community College.** This form may also be hand-delivered (Administrative Building, Room A108) or faxed (718-368-5024) to the Office of Health Services.

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please consult your (your child's) physician. You can also find information about the disease at

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S WEBSITE:
WWW.HEALTH.STATE.NY.US See menu item, "Info for Consumers" and choose "Immunization Program".

WEBSITE OF THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC): WWW.CDC.GOV/NCIDOD/ Select "infectious disease index", click "meningococcal disease" or "meningitis".

WEBSITE OF THE AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION:
WWW.ACHA.ORG/# See "Information & Resources", click "Meningitis on Campus".

Sincerely,

Delores Washington, RN, EdD
Director of Health Services
Kingsborough Community College