

To: New Housing Students
From: Hazel Malone, Director of Resident Life and Housing Services
Re: Meningitis

As the Director of Housing, I am delighted to congratulate you on your decision to attend The Art Institute of Houston. I am writing to inform you about important health information concerning meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis.

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. College freshmen who live in dormitories and teenagers 15-19 have an increased risk of getting meningococcal disease (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2008. *Meningococcal Vaccines: What you need to know*. Atlanta, GA. Retrieved September 20, 2010 from <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-mening.pdf>).

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.

On June 19, 2009, the Jamie Shanbaum Act, was signed by the Governor of Texas. This act states that all students, in order to live in college housing, must either have had a meningitis vaccine or sign a waiver stating they choose not to get the vaccine at the time of move in for reasons of conscience or provide an affidavit from their medical practitioner if it would be medically unwise for them to receive a meningitis vaccine. If the student is under age 18, the student's parent or guardian must also sign the waiver.

The Art Institute of Houston will now require students, PRIOR to moving into the housing facility, either to provide proof that they have received the meningitis vaccination or to sign a certification that they have elected not to be vaccinated. Please contact your family physician or local health agency if you are interested in getting a vaccination.

You can find information about the disease on the centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Website, <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html>.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Hazel Malone
Director of Resident Life and Housing Services

WAIVER – VACCINATION AGAINST MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

I understand that The Jamie Shanbaum Act, HB 4189 (2009) requires the following certification from students 18 years of age or older who wish to reside in college housing and who do not provide proof that they have received a vaccination against meningococcal disease. I have elected to sign this waiver rather than to receive a vaccination and/or to provide the school with proof that I have received a vaccination.

Therefore, I hereby certify as follows:

- (1) I have been given detailed information of the risks associated with meningococcal disease and the availability and effectiveness of any vaccine.
- (2) I choose not to receive a vaccination for reasons of conscience including the following. _____

- (3) If I have chosen / listed a medical reason, I have also included the affidavit of a physician duly registered and licensed in the United States in which the physician states that in his or her opinion, a meningitis vaccine would be injurious to my health and well-being.

Signed: _____

Name of Student (PRINT): _____

Date: _____

If under 18, parent must also sign;

Signed: _____