

Dear Student (Student's Parent or Guardian):

As the Health Center director at the College of Staten Island, 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).

The College of Staten Island 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;  
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.

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.

The College of Staten Island does not offer meningococcal immunization.

The meningitis vaccine is provided at the New York City Department of Health Travelers' clinics. [http://www.cdc.gov/travel/travel\\_clinics.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/travel_clinics.htm).

The meningitis vaccine may or may not be covered by insurance.

The vaccine cost is approximately \$75.00.

The Ryan Chelsea Clinton Community Center, 645 Tenth Avenue (between 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup>) New York, NY 10036, (212) 265-4500, offers the meningitis vaccine at a low and affordable cost.

Before you register for classes, **please complete the Meningococcal Meningitis Response Form and return it to the College Health Center, Bldg. 1C, Room 112, no later than September 30, 2003.** Note: Per public health law, the college may not permit any student to attend the institution in excess of 30 days without complying with this law.

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

The College Health Center's website at

[www.csi.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/healthcenter](http://www.csi.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/healthcenter)

New York State Department of Health website:

[www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/immun/immunization.htm](http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/immun/immunization.htm)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) websites:

[www.cdc.gov/travel/travel\\_clinics.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/travel_clinics.htm)

[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo)

American College Health Association (ACHA) website:

[www.acha.org/projects\\_programs/meningitis/disease\\_info.cfm#overview](http://www.acha.org/projects_programs/meningitis/disease_info.cfm#overview)

and the National Meningitis Association (NMA) website: <http://www.nmaus.org>

Sincerely,

Terianne Darragh, RN, BSN  
Director of the Health Center