



Permian Basin Community Colleges Press Release



October 17, 2011

Howard College
Midland College
Odessa College

For Immediate Release

Bacterial Meningitis Vaccination Requirement

Contact:

- Cindy Smith, Howard College director of information, (432) 264-5034, csmith@howardcollege.edu
- Rebecca Bell, Midland College dean of community relations & special events, (432) 685-4556, rbell@midland.edu
- Cheri Dalton, Odessa College director of media relations and publications, (432) 335-6530, cdalton@odessa.edu

Beginning with the Spring 2012 semester, a new state law will require all students entering institutions of higher education to show evidence of receiving a bacterial meningitis vaccination or booster dose during the five year period prior to enrollment and at least 10 days before the first day of the semester. Entering students include those entering college for the first time, transfer students from other colleges and returning or continuing students who have had a break in enrollment of at least one fall or spring semester.

To get the vaccine, students should check with their family doctor or local public health department.

The following is acceptable evidence of vaccination or receiving a booster dose:

- ✓ The signature or stamp of a physician or his/her designee, or public health personnel on a form which shows the month, day and year the vaccination dose or booster was administered;
- ✓ An official immunization record generated from a state or local health authority; or
- ✓ An official record received from school officials, including a record from another state.

Bacterial Meningitis is a serious, potentially deadly disease that can progress extremely fast. It is an inflammation of the membranes that surround the brain and spinal cord. The bacteria that cause meningitis can also infect the blood. This disease strikes about 3,000

Americans annually, including 100-125 on college campuses, leading to 5-15 deaths among college-students every year. There is a treatment; however, those that survive might develop severe health problems or disabilities. The disease is transmitted when people exchange saliva (such as kissing, or by sharing drinking containers, utensils, cigarettes, toothbrushes, etc.) or come in contact with respiratory or throat secretions.

More information can be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo) and the American College Health Association (www.acha.org).

EXEMPTIONS

The law allows for exemptions for

- Students 30 years of age or older
- Students who are enrolled only in online or other distance learning courses
- Students who submit an affidavit or a certificate signed by a physician who is duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccination required would be injurious to the health and well-being of the student
- Students who submit an affidavit signed by the student stating that the student declines the vaccination for bacterial meningitis for reasons of conscience, including religious belief. A conscientious exemption form ("Affidavit Request for Exemption from Immunizations for Reasons of Conscience") from the Texas Department of State Health Services must be used. Allow several weeks to submit and have form approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

ADDITIONAL STUDENT INFORMATION

Personnel at Howard College, Midland College and Odessa College are continuing to receive updates from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on the bacterial meningitis vaccination requirement. Please continue to check the colleges' websites for updated information.

Howard College: www.howardcollege.edu

Midland College: www.midland.edu

Odessa College: www.odessa.edu

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