WESTMINSTER COLLEGE

Mandatory Meningitis Immunization/Exemption Form

College students are at increased risk for meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis. 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. Protective antibody levels may be achieved within 7-10 days after vaccination and provides protection for approximately 3 to 5 years. As with any vaccine, it may not protect 100% of all susceptible individuals.

Pennsylvania state law states that colleges shall prohibit a student from residing in a dormitory unless the student has received vaccination against meningococcal disease. A student is exempt if they sign a written waiver stating that they have received and reviewed information provided by the college and have chosen not to be vaccinated.

- **What is meningococcal meningitis?** Meningitis is rare. But when it strikes, this potentially fatal bacterial disease can lead to swelling of 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.
- **How is it spread?** Meningococcal meningitis is spread through the air via respiratory secretions or close contact with and infected person. This can include coughing, sneezing, kissing or sharing items like utensils, cigarettes and drinking glasses.
- **What are the symptoms?** Symptoms of meningococcal meningitis often resemble the flu and can include high fever, severe headache, stiff neck, rash, nausea, vomiting, lethargy and confusion.
- **Who is at risk?** Certain college students, particularly freshmen who live in dormitories or residence halls, have been found to have an increased risk for meningococcal meningitis. Other undergraduates can also consider vaccination to reduce their risk for the disease.

For more information: Visit the websites of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo and the American College Health Association at www.acha.org.

I have received and read the material provided to me by Westminster College regarding the risks associated with meningococcal disease and the availability and effectiveness of meningitis vaccines. **Please check the box below that applies and sign.**

- □ I have received the meningitis vaccine, dose #1_____ dose #2_____
- □ I have chosen not to be vaccinated for religious or other reasons against meningococcal disease.

_____ _____

Name of student (print) Signature of student Date

_____

Signature of parent/guardian Date
(If the student is under 18 years old)