

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Presidents and Chancellors – Texas Public and Independent Higher Education Institutions and Systems

FROM: MacGregor M. Stephenson

DATE: November 24, 2009

SUBJECT: New rules regarding vaccination requirement against Bacterial Meningitis for new students and transfer students living in on-campus housing

The 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature (2009) requires all first-time students of an institution of higher education, including a transfer student, who resides in on-campus housing to show evidence of being immunized against bacterial meningitis. Texas Education Code, Section 51.9192, Subchapter Z, establishes the requirement for bacterial meningitis vaccination for certain students and identifies exceptions to that requirement. This subchapter applies only to first-time students or transfer students enrolling in public, private, or independent institutions of higher education on or after January 1, 2010, who plan to live in on-campus dormitories or other on-campus housing facilities.

Please note that students must provide documentation of having received the vaccination at least 10 days prior to the student taking up residence in on-campus housing. Each institution of higher education that has on-campus housing must designate an office and administrative official to receive evidence from students of having received the vaccination.

Exclusions from compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical contraindications, or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief. A conscientious exemption form from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) must be used. If a student has an objection to receiving the vaccination for reasons of conscience, there are several options for students to receive the conscientious objection forms. A student may submit a request on a DSHS online form, fax, or regular mail. DSHS has 5 days from the date they receive the requests to process and mail out the form. Unless it's a very busy time of the year, like back-to-school in August, the forms are sent out within 24-36 hours. However, it may take a student up to 2 weeks to receive the forms. The forms would then need to be completed, notarized and provided to the designated school official at your institution prior to the student taking up residence. For more information, please refer to [www.immunizetexas.com](http://www.immunizetexas.com), click on the link to "School/Childcare Requirements," and then click on the link to "Exclusions from Immunization Requirements."

Information about bacterial meningitis, including the applicable legislation and board rules can be found the Coordinating Board's website at the following link: <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=A641CD0D-E56A-A36A-1BCB39FF80781178>.

Any questions can be addressed to Donna Carlin at [Donna.Carlin@thecb.state.tx.us](mailto:Donna.Carlin@thecb.state.tx.us), or 512-427-6241. Thanks for your help in this important matter.