March 2010

Dear Parent and Student,

As Medical Coordinator of Hubbs Health Center and on behalf of the medical staff at the Health Center please accept my welcome. 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 colleges and universities to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all enrolled students whether they live on or off campus. This law became effective in August 2003.

Hobart and William Smith Colleges are 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 student’s parent or guardian. This information must include the availability and cost of meningococcal meningitis vaccine (Menomune™ or Menactra™) 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. If the student is a minor (under the age of 18) the parent or guardian must sign the waiver.

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 as many as 3,000 Americans each year and is responsible for 150-300 deaths. Between 100 and 125 meningitis cases occur on college campuses and as many as 15 students will die from the disease each year.
Two vaccines are available in the United States:

- **Meningococcal polysaccharide** (MPSV4, also known as Menomune™) has been available since the 1970s
- **Meningococcal conjugate vaccine** (MCV4 also known as Menactra™) was licensed in 2005.

Both vaccines can protect against four types of the bacteria that cause meningitis in the United States: A,C,Y,W-135. These types account for approximately three-quarters of the meningitis cases among college students.

Hobart and William Smith Colleges offer Menomune™ and Menactra™ to any student who requests it. The cost of the vaccine will be approximately $100 and must be prepaid to the Hubbs Health Center by the student or his/her parents. Health insurance reimbursements for this vary. If requested, Hubbs Health Center will provide you with a copy of the immunization charge to submit to your insurance carrier for reimbursement.

I encourage you to carefully review the enclosed materials. Please indicate your choice of vaccine or waiver on the pre-admission physical exam form within the immunization section.

**NOTE: PER PUBLIC HEALTH LAW, NO INSTITUTION SHOULD PERMIT ANY STUDENT TO ATTEND THE INSTITUTION IN EXCESS OF 30 DAYS WITHOUT COMPLYING WITH THIS LAW. THE 30-DAY PERIOD MAY BE EXTENDED TO 60 DAYS IF A STUDENT CAN SHOW A GOOD FAITH EFFORT TO COMPLY.**

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please feel free to contact our health service and/or consult your child’s physician. You can also find information about the disease on the Colleges’ Web site at [www.hws.edu](http://www.hws.edu), New York State Department of Health Web site at [www.health.state.ny.us](http://www.health.state.ny.us), The Centers For Disease Control And Prevention (CDC) Web site at [www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo), or the American College Health Association’s Web site at [www.acha.org](http://www.acha.org)

Sincerely,

Betti Green, R.N. C. ANP
Clinical Coordinator
Hubbs Health Center
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

Enclosures