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January 1, 2017

Dear Parent:

I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningococcal meningitis. New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) §2167 and Subpart 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code requires overnight children's camps to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all campers who attend camp for 7 or more consecutive nights.

Holmes Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center is required to maintain a record of the following for each camper:

- A response to receipt of meningococcal disease and vaccine information signed by the camper's parent or guardian; AND EITHER
- A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization OR
- An acknowledgement of meningococcal disease risks and refusal of meningococcal meningitis immunization signed by the camper's parent or guardian.

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness. It is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis in children 2 through 18 years old in the United States. Meningitis is an infection of the covering of the brain and the spinal cord.

Meningococcal disease also causes blood infections.

About 1,000 – 1,200 people get meningococcal disease each year in the U.S. Even when they are treated with antibiotics, 10-15% of these people die. Of those who live, another 11%-19% lose their arms or legs, have problems with their nervous systems, become deaf, or suffer seizures or strokes.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease. But it is most common in infants less than one year of age and people 16-21 years. Children with certain medical conditions, such as lack of a spleen, have an increased risk of getting meningococcal disease. College freshmen living in dorms are also at increased risk.

Meningococcal infections can be treated with drugs such as penicillin. Still, many people who get the disease die from it, and many others are affected for life. This is why preventing the disease through use of meningococcal vaccine is important for people at highest risk.

There are two kinds of meningococcal vaccine in the U.S.:

- Meningococcal conjugate vaccine (**MCV4**) is the preferred vaccine for people 55 years of age and younger. For example, 2 MCV4 vaccines are Menactra™ and Menveo™.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend two doses of MCV4 for all adolescents 11 through 18 years of age: the first dose at 11 or 12 years of age, with a booster dose at age 16. Adolescents in this age group with HIV infection should get three doses: 2 doses 2 months apart at 11 or 12 years, plus a booster at age 16.

If the first dose (or series) is given between 13 and 15 years of age, the booster should be given between 16 and 18. If the first dose (or series) is given after the 16th birthday, a booster is not needed.

- Meningococcal polysaccharide vaccine (**MPSV4**) has been available since the 1970s. It is the only meningococcal vaccine licensed for people older than 55. The trade name of MPSV4 is Menomune.

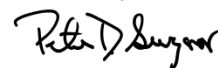
Both vaccines can prevent 4 types of meningococcal disease, including 2 of the 3 types most common in the United States and a type that causes epidemics in Africa. There are other types of meningococcal disease; the vaccines do not protect against these.

Information about the availability and cost of the vaccine can be obtained from your health care provider. Holmes Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center is not able to provide immunization services directly for campers. Please consult the camper's physician when completing the enclosed health form.

I encourage you to carefully review the attached information. **Please complete the enclosed Meningococcal Vaccination Response Form and return it to Holmes Presbyterian Camp and Conference Center with your Health Form at least two weeks before the beginning of your camp session.** This form needs to be on file for your camper to attend the scheduled camp session.

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please feel free to contact the Putnam County Health Department (845) 278-6130 and/or consult your child's physician. You can also find information about the disease at the website of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm.

Sincerely,



Rev. Peter D. Surgenor
Executive Director



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MENINGOCOCCAL MENINGITIS VACCINATION RESPONSE FORM

New York State Public Health Law requires that a parent or guardian of campers who attend an overnight children's camp for seven (7) or more consecutive nights, complete and return the following form to the camp.

Check one box and sign below.

My child has had the meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4), for example Menactra or Menveo.

Date received: _____

[Note: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend two doses of MCV4 for all adolescents 11 through 18 years of age: the first dose at 11 or 12 years of age, with a booster dose at age 16. Adolescents in this age group with HIV infection should get three doses: 2 doses 2 months apart at 11 or 12 years, plus a booster at age 16.

If the first dose (or series) is given between 13 and 15 years of age, the booster should be given between 16 and 18. If the first dose (or series) is given after the 16th birthday, a booster is not needed.]

I have read, or have had explained to me, the information regarding meningococcal meningitis disease. I understand the risks of not receiving the vaccine. I have decided that my child will **not** obtain immunization against meningococcal meningitis disease.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Parent or Guardian)

Phone Number: _____ - _____ - _____

Camper's Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Session attending: _____ Dates: _____

Mailing address: _____

Parent or guardian email address (Optional): _____

There's no place like HOLMES!