§ 2167. Immunization against meningococcal meningitis. 1. As used in this section, unless the context requires otherwise:

a. The term "student" means a person attending an institution and, in the case of a student attending college, "student" means a person who is registered to attend or who attends classes at an institution, who is enrolled for at least six semester hours or the equivalent per semester, or at least four semester hours per quarter.

b. The term "institution" means an academy or college, as defined in section two of the education law, or a children's overnight camp as defined in section one thousand three hundred ninety-two of this chapter, where the person attending such camp remains overnight for a period of not fewer than seven days.

c. The term "immunization" means an adequate dose or doses of an immunizing agent against meningococcal meningitis in accordance with regulations issued by the commissioner, utilizing generally accepted medical standards and taking into consideration recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Physicians, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and/or other similar nationally or internationally recognized scientific organizations.

2. Each institution shall distribute, in a form provided or approved by the commissioner, written information about meningococcal meningitis and meningitis immunization to all students. The information provided by the institution shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

a. a description of the disease and means of transmission;

b. the benefits, risks, and effectiveness of immunization;

c. the availability and cost of immunization, including an indication of whether or not the institution offers meningococcal meningitis immunization services.

3. Each institution shall also distribute, in a form provided or approved by the commissioner of health, a response form, to be completed by the student or, where the student is under the age of eighteen years, such student's parent or guardian, which shall include the following:

a. The student, or if under the age of eighteen years the parent or guardian of the student, certifies that the student has already received immunization against meningococcal meningitis within the ten years preceding the date of the response form;

b. The student, or if under the age of eighteen years the parent or guardian of such student, has received and reviewed the information provided by the institution, understands the risks of meningococcal meningitis and the benefits of immunization, and has decided that the student shall not obtain immunization against meningococcal meningitis.

The student, or if under the age of eighteen years the parent or guardian of such student, shall indicate his or her decision in a box or space placed appropriately on the form and shall return the completed form to the institution. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to prohibit an institution from incorporating the form required by this subdivision into another health certificate or form required by the institution.

4. Each institution shall maintain completed response forms.

5. No institution shall permit any student to attend the institution in excess of thirty days without complying with this section; provided, however, that such thirty day period may be extended to not more than sixty days if a student can show a good faith effort to comply with this section.

6. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit institutions from adopting or maintaining more stringent policies regarding immunization against meningococcal meningitis.