Dear Parent and Students:

On behalf of Colorado School of Mines, I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a rare but potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningitis.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued recommendations stating that all adolescents 11 through 18 years of age should be immunized against meningococcal disease. This includes first-year college students living in the residence halls. The American College Health Association (ACHA) supports these recommendations as well. ACHA further states that other college students under 25 years of age who wishes to reduce the risk for the disease may choose to be vaccinated.

Attached is a Meningococcal form. The form verifies that you have either received the vaccine or that you have received this information and chose not to receive the vaccine. It is imperative that the attached (blue) Meningococcal Vaccine form be return with your residence hall contract. Your residence hall room will not be assigned until this completed form has been received by the CSM Residence Life department.

Meningococcal disease strikes 1,400 to 3,000 Americans each year and is responsible for approximately 150 to 300 deaths. Adolescents and young adults account for nearly 30 percent of all cases of meningitis in the United States. In addition, approximately 100 to 125 cases of meningococcal disease occur on college campuses each year, and 5 to 15 students will die as a result.

Due to lifestyle factors, such as crowded living situations, active or passive smoking, irregular sleep patterns, and sharing personal items, college students living in the residence halls are more likely to acquire meningococcal disease than the general college population. Meningococcal infection is contagious and progresses very rapidly. It can easily be misdiagnosed as the flu and if not treated early, meningitis can lead to death or permanent disabilities.

A reformulated meningococcal vaccine (“conjugate”) is available that has the potential to provide longer duration of protection against four of the five strains (or types) of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease – type A, C, Y, and W-135. The duration of the vaccination is three to five years.

We encourage you to visit the Centers for Disease and Control: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo or American College Health Association: www.acha.org for more information or consult your child’s physician.

Sincerely,

Brent Waller
Associate Director of Housing
Colorado School of Mines