

By Senator Pruitt

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to immunizations; requiring
certain postsecondary students to be vaccinated
against meningococcal disease; providing
exemptions; providing that institutions of
higher education need not provide or pay for
such vaccinations; providing for rulemaking;
providing an effective date.

WHEREAS, meningococcal disease is a serious disease
that can lead to death within only a few hours of onset, and
WHEREAS, meningococcal disease is a highly contagious
but largely preventable infection of the spinal cord fluid and
the fluid that surrounds the brain, and
WHEREAS, 1 in 10 cases of meningococcal disease is
fatal, and
WHEREAS, one in seven survivors is left with a severe
handicap, such as the loss of a limb, mental retardation,
paralysis, deafness, and seizures, and
WHEREAS, people of any age can carry the disease for
days, weeks, or months without knowing it and without becoming
ill, and
WHEREAS, at any time, around 10 percent to 25 percent
of the population are carriers, and
WHEREAS, scientific evidence suggests that college
students living in dormitory facilities are six times more
likely to get the deadly disease of meningitis, and
WHEREAS, immunization against meningococcal disease
will decrease the risk of the disease, and

1 WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature finds that college
2 freshmen residing in on-campus housing should be vaccinated
3 against meningococcal disease, NOW, THEREFORE,

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5 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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7 Section 1. Meningococcal disease; vaccination
8 requirements; exemption.--

9 (1) Any individual enrolled in an institution of
10 higher education who resides in on-campus housing shall be
11 vaccinated against meningococcal disease.

12 (2) An institution of higher education shall provide
13 detailed information on the risks associated with
14 meningococcal disease and the availability and effectiveness
15 of any vaccine to individuals who wish to be exempted from the
16 vaccination requirement. An individual is exempt from the
17 vaccination requirement set forth in subsection (1) if:

18 (a) The individual is 18 years of age or older and he
19 or she signs a waiver in a form adopted by the department, by
20 rule, which states that the individual has received and
21 reviewed the information provided and has chosen not be
22 vaccinated against meningococcal disease; or

23 (b) The individual is a minor and his or her parent or
24 guardian signs a written waiver in a form adopted by the
25 department, by rule, which states that the parent or guardian
26 has received and reviewed the information provided and has
27 chosen to not have the individual vaccinated against
28 meningococcal disease.

29 (3) This section does not require any institution of
30 higher education to provide or pay for vaccinations against
31 meningococcal disease.

