



**PENNSYLVANIA COALITION
FOR INFORMED CONSENT**

Exercising Your Right to a Religious Vaccine Exemption in College

If you are opposed to a vaccine due to your religious beliefs, the following steps apply to you. This is NOT legal advice. These are steps which have helped others in dealing with college vaccine requirements over the years. Based on your individual situation, it may be in your best interest to get an attorney.

1. Keep detailed records of all correspondence related to this issue, including written policies, emails, etc. Written communication is preferred for ease of record-keeping. This information will be needed in the event of obtaining legal counsel.

2. The Pennsylvania Constitution provides protection to citizens based on religious beliefs.

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/LI/CT/HTM/00/00.HTM>

https://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/bill_of_rightss5.html

3. Your religious beliefs do not need to be corroborated by any religious authority, pastor, priest, church, or denomination. Answering questions about your personal religious beliefs and church affiliation seems to lead to interrogation and scrutiny about the validity of one's beliefs, and may give your college reason to investigate or attempt to disqualify your beliefs. It is best instead to focus only on the privacy of your beliefs without sharing any details.

4. Here is a sample letter from a member:

"To Whom it May Concern:

I am opposed to getting the COVID-19 vaccine due to my sincerely held, personal, religious beliefs. This belief is my own and not necessarily that of an organized religion, church, or denomination.

Sincerely, [name]"

5. If the college has a document in which you are requested to explain the reasons for your religious opposition to vaccines, you might respond to it by writing "my religious beliefs are personal. The law does not require explanation". We are suggesting that you do not comply with requests to explain any of your personal religious beliefs, or get clergy to sign any forms or letters.