



NATIONAL MENINGITIS ASSOCIATION APPLAUDS CDC'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON IMMUNIZATION PRACTICES FOR ITS DECISION TO EXPAND ADOLESCENT MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE IMMUNIZATION

New Immunization Recommendations for all Adolescents 11-18 Years To Help Reduce Incidence of Potentially Fatal Bacterial Infection

June 27, 2007

ATLANTA, Ga. – The National Meningitis Association (NMA) strongly supports new recommendations issued today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to expand meningococcal disease immunization to all adolescents 11-18 years of age. Previous recommendations were limited to vaccination only at the pre-adolescent health care visit and, for those not previously immunized, before entering high school or before college, if planning to live in a dormitory.

“NMA is very pleased that these recommendations were expanded to now include all adolescents 11-18 years of age strengthening the recommendation to help ensure every adolescent and young adult is protected from the devastating effects of meningococcal disease,” said Lynn Bozof, NMA Executive Director. “The pre-adolescent visit is a good time for parents to talk to their child's health care provider about immunization; however, the vaccine can be given to adolescents aged 11-18 at any health care visit and in conjunction with other vaccines recommended at this age.”

Meningococcal disease is a serious, potentially fatal, bacterial infection that strikes nearly 3,000 Americans annually. Adolescents and young adults are at increased risk of contracting the disease and account for nearly 30 percent of all U.S. cases. The ACIP expanded its immunization recommendations in light of the increased risk of disease among this age group.

To help support CDC in its efforts to raise public awareness of meningococcal disease and help communicate the expanded immunization recommendations, NMA will launch an informational mailing to parents of 11 and 12 year olds in all 50 states to encourage parents to proactively seek immunization for their adolescent children.

About the National Meningitis Association

NMA is a national nonprofit public charity founded by parents of children who have died or live with permanent disabilities from meningococcal disease. NMA's mission is to educate families, medical professionals and others about meningococcal disease and prevention approaches.

For more information about NMA and the organization's activities, or to contact a member of NMA, please visit www.nmaus.org or call 1-866-FONE-NMA (1-866-366-3662).

###