

Recent Cases of Serogroup B Meningococcal Disease Reinforce Need for U.S. Vaccine  
A Statement from the National Meningitis Association

September 19, 2014 – Atlanta, GA – This week, a student at Georgetown University died from serogroup B meningococcal disease. Continuing reports of serogroup B cases are an important reminder that there is an unmet public health need in the prevention of bacterial meningitis in the U.S.

In late 2013 and early 2014, outbreaks of serogroup B disease at Princeton University and the University of California Santa Barbara prompted a collaborative public health effort to help protect students on these campuses with the use of a vaccine not yet licensed in the U.S. Progress has been made in recent months, and two vaccines that can help prevent serogroup B cases are now in priority review with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The National Meningitis Association (NMA) is hopeful that both vaccines will be licensed and that policy makers will recommend vaccination routinely for all adolescents to help protect this high-risk group from infection. NMA also believes that every parent and healthcare professional should understand the potential impact of meningococcal disease and be knowledgeable about vaccination options. Any parent who wishes to have their child vaccinated, whether or not they are at increased risk, should be able to request it from their healthcare provider.

Meningococcal disease affects persons of all ages in the U.S., though adolescents and young adults are at increased risk. Meningococcal vaccines currently approved and available in the U.S. are recommended for routine vaccination of kids at age 11-12 and again at 16. These vaccines protect against four strains of the disease: A, C, Y and W-135. They do not prevent B-strain meningococcal disease, which accounts for one-third of U.S. cases.

Although it is rare, meningococcal disease can come on quickly and can lead to death or disability within hours. While vaccines offer the best chance of protection against the infection, knowledge of symptoms can help ensure prompt medical treatment is sought if needed. It is important for parents and healthcare professionals to be aware of [the symptoms of meningococcal disease](#) in infants so they can better recognize the disease.

Media Requests

Lynn Bozof, president of NMA, whose family was affected by meningococcal disease, is available for phone or Skype interviews and can be reached at [lynn.nma@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.nma@gmail.com) or 678-779-3370.

About NMA

NMA works to protect families from the potentially devastating effects of meningococcal disease by educating the public, medical professionals and others about the disease and its prevention. The NMA network also provides critical emotional support for families who have been affected by meningococcal disease.

Visit NMA at [nmaus.org](http://nmaus.org) or find us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).