

The National Meningitis Association (NMA) Applauds FDA Approval of Second Vaccine To Protect Against Serogroup B Meningococcal Disease

January, 23, 2015 – Fort Myers, FL – Today the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the approval of Novartis' Bexsero® for the prevention of [serogroup B meningococcal disease](#) in individuals ages 10 to 25. Bexsero and Pfizer's vaccine Trumenba®, which received FDA approval in October, represent a significant step forward in helping prevent this devastating disease.

"I have heard over and over from parents that they thought their children were fully protected because they were vaccinated with the currently recommended vaccine, which protects against four major strains of meningococcal disease, but does not protect against serogroup B," said NMA President Lynn Bozof. "Now that we have the tools to fully protect our children, we encourage policymakers to do the right thing and recommend these vaccines for adolescents who are at high risk for infection."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) is expected to make its first recommendation for use of serogroup B vaccines in February 2015. Since 2005, the CDC has recommended routine vaccination with a conjugate vaccine that protects against serogroups A, C, W and Y at age 11-12 with a booster at age 16.

Recent outbreaks on college campuses of serogroup B meningococcal disease, which accounts for one-third of cases in the U.S., led the FDA to accelerate the approval process for these vaccines. In 2013 and 2014, there were outbreaks at Princeton University and the University of California, Santa Barbara. At least two other college students, in cases unrelated to these outbreaks, died from serogroup B meningococcal disease in the last four months.

Stephen Ross lost his 19-year-old daughter, Stephanie, who was a sophomore at Drexel University. Her case was connected to the cases that occurred on the Princeton campus. "As a percentage of all of the students that populate our country's college campuses, we realize that these deaths represent a small number," said Ross. "But when it is your child, any number above zero is unacceptable – especially if it could have been prevented."

About Meningococcal Disease

Meningococcal disease is a rare, sometimes deadly, bacterial infection. It can strike quickly and lead to death or disability within hours. While vaccines offer the best chance of protection against the infection, knowledge of [the symptoms of meningococcal disease](#) can help ensure prompt medical treatment is sought if needed. To learn more, visit www.nma.us.org.

Media Requests

To speak with a family who has been affected by serogroup B meningococcal disease or Lynn Bozof, president of NMA, please contact us at 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 www.nmaus.org or find us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).