

**Recent Cases of Meningococcal Disease on College Campuses
Reinforce Need for Education about Prevention
A Statement from the National Meningitis Association**

February 10, 2015 – Fort Myers, FL – In recent weeks, there have been at least five meningococcal disease cases confirmed at college campuses across the United States, with an additional case suspected. These cases reinforce the need to educate students, parents and faculty about currently available vaccines to protect against all major strains of this potentially fatal bacterial infection.

Meningococcal disease is a bacterial infection that most often causes meningitis (infection of the brain and spinal cord), or meningococemia (bloodstream infection) or sometimes both. At Providence College in Rhode Island, two students were diagnosed with [serogroup B](#) meningitis. At the University of Oregon, three students are reported to have meningococemia and one case was confirmed as serogroup B. This weekend, a student at Yale University in Connecticut was hospitalized for a suspected case of meningitis.

All three colleges have implemented programs to educate their students. Providence College organized an [on-campus vaccine clinic](#) to protect students against serogroup B. Two different vaccines are available to protect against the disease:

- The quadrivalent vaccine protects against four major strains of the meningococcal bacteria: A, C, W and Y. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) currently recommends this vaccine at age 11-12 with a booster at age 16.
- Two monovalent serogroup B vaccines were recently approved in the US for ages 10 to 25 years. The CDC has not yet issued a routine recommendation for these vaccines.

“We encourage all college students to make sure they are up-to-date with the currently recommended vaccines, including the booster before they leave for college,” said Lynn Bozof, President of NMA. “Parents and students should also speak to their healthcare providers about the new vaccines to protect against serogroup B, which we hope will soon be recommended to protect all adolescents.”

Although it is rare, meningococcal disease can strike quickly and lead to devastating complications such as hearing loss, brain or kidney damage or limb amputations. While vaccines offer the best chance of protection against the infection, knowledge of the symptoms can help ensure prompt medical treatment is sought if needed.

Media Requests

To speak with a family who has been affected by 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, watch NMA’s PSA “[The Right Thing to Do](#),” and find us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).