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TO: Healthcare Providers in Massachusetts

FROM: Alfred DeMaria, Jr., MD
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DATE: March 5, 2018

RE: Invasive Meningococcal Serogroup B Infection at Smith College:
Recommendations for the Five College Consortium

Last week, a student at Smith College was diagnosed with invasive meningococcal disease (IMD). The student's illness was caused by serogroup B. Last fall, two students at UMass Amherst were also diagnosed with invasive meningococcal disease serogroup B. It is possible that the recent case represents a continuation of the outbreak identified at UMass last fall. Results of strain typing are not yet available.

Serogroup B meningococcal vaccine (MenB) is now highly recommended for undergraduate students attending the following schools that are part of the Five College Consortium: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and UMass Amherst.

This recommendation includes:

- All undergraduate students;
- Other students living in undergraduate housing, and
- Persons with medical conditions that place them at high risk for invasive disease (asplenia, sickle cell disease, complement deficiencies, microbiologists routinely working with isolates, and those taking the medication eculizumab [Soliris]).

State-supplied MenB vaccine may be used for students under the age of 19 years.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF ALL CLINICIANS:

1. Be alert for cases compatible with meningococcal disease in students attending schools in the Five College Consortium and their close contacts. Prompt recognition and antibiotic treatment of meningococcal disease is critical. Many students will be leaving campus to begin spring break on or before March 10, 2018.
2. Immediately report all suspect cases of meningococcal disease to the MDPH at (617) 983-6800. Do not wait for laboratory confirmation to report a clinically suspected case.

3. Obtain blood and CSF cultures on all suspect cases prior to administration of antibiotics, if possible, to enhance detection of *Neisseria meningitidis*.
4. Ascertain and document potential close contacts of any suspected case.
5. Vaccinate the target groups of students with MenB vaccine, as described above.
6. Vaccinate other students and staff who wish to receive MenB vaccine.

When billing for privately purchased MenB vaccine administered to students and staff, providers should indicate that the Five College Consortium has been designated by public health authorities as having an outbreak of meningococcal meningitis.

Symptoms of meningitis may include sudden onset of fever, headache, and stiff neck, accompanied by nausea, vomiting, photophobia, and altered mental status. Symptoms of meningococcal bacteremia or septicemia may include fatigue, nausea, vomiting, cold hands and feet, chills, severe muscle aches or abdominal pain, rapid breathing, diarrhea, and appearance of a petechial or purpuric rash.

Although the risk of invasive meningococcal disease in any single university student is very low, and known close contacts of the three cases have been identified and provided chemoprophylaxis, Massachusetts healthcare providers are asked to be alert for cases compatible with meningococcal disease, and to provide MenB vaccination.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that those at increased risk of meningococcal disease (including when an outbreak occurs) can be vaccinated with either Bexsero (MenB-4C) or Trumenba (MenB-FHbp) vaccines. Guidance about the schedules for these two MenB vaccines can be found at:

- Meningococcal Serogroup B Vaccines by Age and Risk Factor, Immunization Action Coalition
<http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2035.pdf>

Additional guidance for providers about meningococcal vaccines can be at:

- CDC Meningococcal Vaccine Website:
<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/mening/hcp/index.html>

A fact sheet about serogroup B meningococcal disease can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/downloads/17-275138D-MeningococcalDis-B-Outbreak-FS.pdf>

An MDPH fact sheet concerning invasive meningococcal disease and college students is available at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/factsheets/m-o/meningococcal-college-students.pdf>.

For questions and concerns about invasive meningococcal disease and these recommendations in Massachusetts please call the Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at 617-983-6800.