NEWS RELEASE

ACHA and Leading Health Organizations Urge Health Care Professionals to Recommend Second Dose of Meningococcal Meningitis Vaccine

Statistics show low MCV4 booster vaccination rate among teens; booster is needed to prevent waning immunity against meningococcal disease in young adults and college students

HANOVER, Md (November 12, 2015) – The American College Health Association (ACHA), the nation’s principal advocate and leadership organization for college health, has joined the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine (SAHM) in signing the Immunization Action Coalition’s (IAC) public “Dear Colleague” letter urging health care professionals to strongly recommend the second (booster) dose of meningococcal ACWY vaccine (“MCV4”) at age 16.

CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends the booster vaccine at age 16 after initial vaccination at age 11-12 to prevent waning immunity in ages 16-21, the period of greatest vulnerability to meningococcal disease.1,2 Despite these recommendations, CDC data shows only 28.5 percent of eligible teens receive the booster vaccine, leaving millions at risk, especially incoming college freshmen planning to live in campus housing.3,4

“ACHA strongly supports the use of vaccines to protect our students,” said ACHA Executive Director Matt J. Granato, LLM, MBA. “We recognize the vital role that vaccine coverage plays in herd immunity and encourage health care professionals to follow ACIP vaccine recommendations to give students the protection they need when joining campus communities.”

ACHA recognizes that certain college students are at an increased risk of meningococcal disease because of factors such as age and residence hall living and social activities such as sharing drinks and kissing.4,5,6 In 2014, ACHA revised its Recommendations for Institutional Prematriculation Immunizations to echo the ACIP recommendation of administering the initial dose of MCV4 at age 11-12 and the booster dose at age 16.

“Meningococcal disease can be devastating to students and campuses,” said Susan Even, MD, chair of the ACHA Vaccine-Preventable Diseases Advisory Committee. “Every health center visit provides an opportunity to make sure students on our campuses have received their booster dose of the quadrivalent meningococcal vaccines.”

The signed IAC “Dear Colleague” letter and ACHA’s Recommendations for Institutional Prematriculation Immunizations can be viewed in PDF format on the ACHA meningitis topic page. Copies of Recommendations for Institutional Prematriculation Immunizations may be obtained by contacting pubs@acha.org.

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About ACHA

The American College Health Association (ACHA), founded in 1920, is a national nonprofit association serving as the nation’s principal leadership organization for advancing the health of college students and campus communities through advocacy, education, and research. ACHA represents a diverse membership that provides and supports the delivery of health care, prevention, and wellness services for the nation’s 20 million college students. ACHA advocates for student health by integrating the critical role of college health into the mission of higher education. For more information about the association visit www.acha.org.

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References


