

# Health Advisory

## Cover Sheet

**DATE:** November 27, 2013

**SUBJECT:** Notice to Healthcare Providers: Recognizing and Reporting Serogroup B Meningococcal Disease Associated with Outbreaks at Princeton University and the University of California at Santa Barbara

### INSTRUCTIONS:

**REDISTRIBUTE AT YOUR DISCRETION.** Share this information with relevant SMEs or contacts (internal and external) as you see fit.

**For LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT reference only**

DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for more information regarding this HAN, contact:

**DPHHS CDCP  
Epidemiology Section  
1-406-444-0273**

**DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:  
1-800-701-5769**

**DPHHS HAN Website:  
[www.han.mt.gov](http://www.han.mt.gov)**

**REMOVE THIS COVER SHEET BEFORE REDISTRIBUTING  
AND REPLACE IT WITH YOUR OWN**

**Please ensure that DPHHS is included on your HAN distribution list.**

### Categories of Health Alert Messages:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

**Information Service:** passes along low level priority messages that do not fit other HAN categories and are for informational purposes only.

**Please call DPHHS to update contact information at 444-0919 or 444-6906**

# Information Sheet

**Date:** November 27, 2013

**Subject:** Notice to Healthcare Providers: Recognizing and Reporting Serogroup B Meningococcal Disease Associated with Outbreaks at Princeton University and the University of California at Santa Barbara

**Background:** Eight student cases of serogroup B meningococcal disease have been reported at Princeton University located in Princeton, New Jersey. Another three student cases have been reported at the University of California located in Santa Barbara, California.

**Information:** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that increased awareness of meningococcal disease and early prompt case recognition among healthcare providers is critical. There is the potential for cases to occur among students traveling to their home states during the holidays.

**Recommendations:** All suspected cases of meningococcal disease must be reported immediately to local public health authorities.

Students of these two universities or a person who had close contact with individuals from these university communities developing fever and headache or rash, should be regarded as suspected meningococcal cases. Immediate testing is encouraged and empiric treatment should be considered.

Report all suspected cases of meningococcal illness to your local public health agency immediately. Local and state public health agencies will assist with case investigations and reporting to other areas.

**This is an official**  
**CDC HEALTH ADVISORY**

Distributed via the CDC Health Alert Network  
November 27, 2013, 10:30 ET (10:30 AM ET)  
CDCHAN-00357

**Notice to Healthcare Providers: Recognizing and Reporting  
Serogroup B Meningococcal Disease Associated with Outbreaks at  
Princeton University and the University of California at Santa Barbara**

**Summary**

*The purpose of this advisory is*

- 1) to alert healthcare providers and health departments about a prolonged meningococcal disease outbreak at Princeton University and a recent outbreak at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), and the potential for cases to occur among students traveling to their home states for Thanksgiving break,*
- 2) to advise healthcare providers about reporting suspected cases of meningococcal disease to the New Jersey Department of Health and California Department of Public Health, and*
- 3) to provide information about PCR testing of isolates from serogroup B meningococcal disease cases at CDC.*

**Background**

Eight cases of serogroup B meningococcal disease have been reported in Princeton University students or persons with links to Princeton University during the last eight months, including three cases reported since September. One case occurred in a high school student who stayed in a Princeton dormitory and developed illness within one day of returning home; the other seven cases occurred in Princeton University undergraduate students. Three cases of serogroup B meningococcal disease have been reported among UCSB undergraduate students during the month of November. No epidemiologic links have been identified between the Princeton University and the UCSB cases. Although both outbreaks are caused by serogroup B, additional molecular typing shows that the outbreaks are being caused by two different strains, indicating that the outbreaks are not related.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH), Princeton University officials, and local health authorities have been working closely together since the first case of meningococcal disease associated with Princeton University was reported in March 2013. CDC, the California Department of Public Health, UCSB officials, and local health authorities have also been working closely together since the first case of meningococcal disease associated with UCSB was reported in November 2013.

**Clinical Recommendations**

Increased awareness of meningococcal disease and prompt early case recognition among healthcare providers is critical. If a Princeton University or UCSB student or a person who has had close contact with someone from those university communities develops a fever and headache or rash, meningococcal disease should be suspected; empiric treatment should be considered; blood or cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) cultures should be collected; and suspected cases should be reported to the local health department.

If there is a high degree of clinical suspicion for meningococcal disease, but CSF or blood specimens are sterile, CDC recommends sending specimens to the Meningitis Laboratory at CDC for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing. The CDC considers the risk of transmission of these strains beyond the university communities to be low. However, to monitor potential transmission of these strains, CDC is requesting that health departments send all isolates, whether or not they are linked to these universities, from serogroup B meningococcal disease cases occurring during November 1, 2013, through December 31,

2013, to the Meningitis Laboratory at CDC for further molecular testing. Please contact the Meningitis and Vaccine Preventable Diseases Branch at [meningnet@cdc.gov](mailto:meningnet@cdc.gov) to arrange shipment of isolates.

CDC does not recommend a change in normal activity to avoid contact with the affected universities or their students. Good hygiene practices such as handwashing, and coughing or sneezing into the arm are recommended. The licensed quadrivalent meningococcal vaccines are recommended for all adolescents 11 through 18 years old and first year college students living in residence halls, but these vaccines do not protect against serogroup B, the serogroup that is causing the Princeton University and UCSB cases. A serogroup B meningococcal vaccine, which is only licensed for use in Europe and Australia, will be offered at Princeton University. FDA has allowed the use of the vaccine at Princeton University under an Investigational New Drug application.

All suspect cases of invasive meningococcal disease associated with the two universities should be reported as follows:

- Cases associated with Princeton University should be reported to Denise Garon, NJDOH, at (609)826-5964 or [Denise.Garon@doh.state.nj.us](mailto:Denise.Garon@doh.state.nj.us).
- Cases associated with UCSB should be reported to Kathleen Harriman, CDPH, at (651)699-2970 or [kathleen.harriman@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:kathleen.harriman@cdph.ca.gov).

Guidance on recommendations for prophylactic use of antibiotics in close contacts of persons with meningococcal disease is available at

[http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6202a2.htm?s\\_cid=rr6202a2\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6202a2.htm?s_cid=rr6202a2_w).

### For More Information

Where can I get additional information?

- Your local and state health departments
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/vaccine-serogroupB.html>

*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national, and international organizations.*

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### Categories of Health Alert Network messages:

**Health Alert** Requires immediate action or attention; highest level of importance

**Health Advisory** May not require immediate action; provides important information for a specific incident or situation

**Health Update** Unlikely to require immediate action; provides updated information regarding an incident or situation

**HAN Info Service** Does not require immediate action; provides general public health information

##This message was distributed to state and local health officers, state and local epidemiologists, state and local laboratory directors, public information officers, HAN coordinators, and clinician organizations##