

MEDICAL SOCIETY
of the
STATE OF NEW YORK

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Senior Vice President /
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Division of Governmental Affairs
MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

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A. 791 (GUNTHER)

**AN ACT to amend the public health law in relation to
meningococcal immunizations**

This measure would require that every person entering sixth grade and 11th grade shall have been immunized against meningococcal disease. The Medical Society supports this bill and urges its enactment.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended that children 11-12 years of age receive the vaccine at this age with the recommendation of a booster between the age of 16 and 18. ACIP consists of a group of medical and public health experts that develops recommendations on how to use vaccines to control diseases in the United States. The recommendations stand as public health advice that will lead to a reduction in the incidence of vaccine preventable diseases and an increase in the safe use of vaccines and related biological products.

The Medical Society of the State of New York has policy that endorses the immunization recommendations for adolescents as set forth by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and will urge NYS to adopt ACIP immunization requirements for adolescents as a condition for school attendance so that the State will be able to participate in the movement toward universal protection.

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria and is a leading cause of bacterial meningitis which is an infection around the brain and spinal cord. The bacteria is spread the exchange of nose and throat droplets, by coughing, sneezing or kissing. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light, confusion and sleepiness. Meningococcal disease also causes blood infections and about one of every tent people who get the disease dies from it. Survivors of the disease may lose their arms or legs, become deaf, have problems with the nervous systems, become developmentally disable or suffer seizures or strokes.

Newborns, infants, adolescents and older adults are most at risk for contacting meningococcal disease and the disease tends to spread more quickly where larger groups of people gather together. College freshmen living in residence halls and military personnel are at increased risk for meningococcal meningitis. Bacterial meningitis can be treated effectively with antibiotics, but it is important that treatment be started as soon as possible.

For all the reasons cited above, the Medical Society of the State of New York supports this measure and urges its approval.

Respectfully submitted,

ELIZABETH DEARS, ESQ.

PFC/Mdisease/support
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