

Dear Campus Community,
University Health Services (UHS) is writing to advise you of an important update regarding meningococcal disease on campus.

As we conveyed to you last month, a student was diagnosed with meningococcal disease on October 24, 2017, and that case is now confirmed as a serogroup B infection. The student is in stable condition. A second case of bacterial meningitis was diagnosed this weekend in a student who lives in a residence hall. This student is in stable condition in an area hospital. The serotype of this case is not yet determined. UHS is reaching out to people who may have been in close contact with the student and have the most significant risk of infection. They are being provided safe and effective antibiotics that can reduce the possibility of infection.

Because these two students were not in close contact with each other, these two cases raise our level of concern. UHS is working in consultation with federal and state public health officials, and will be updating advice as more information becomes available.

The serogroup B strain is not covered by the meningitis vaccine required for college attendance, which does cover strains A, C, Y and W. Therefore, as a precaution, students may want to receive the Serogroup B vaccine, which is available at UHS by appointment. You can also locate a nearby facility that offers it by visiting <https://vaccinefinder.org>. The vaccine may also be available through your local health care provider during the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday break. As with all vaccines, protection is not immediate and should be thought of as a wise precaution for this winter and for several years to come.

UHS continues to advise the campus community to take health smart precautions. Don't swap saliva. Avoid sharing food, drinks and personal items that contact saliva, including drinks from punch bowls. Wash hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve. Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth—germs spread easily this way. If you are sick, have fever, or other concerns, University Health Services is here to help you.

Members of the campus community who have concerns should contact the UHS triage nurse at (413) 577-5229.

Additional information on bacterial meningitis may be found at: <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/cdc/factsheets/m-o/meningococcal-college-students.pdf>, or by calling the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800.

Sincerely,

George A. Corey, M.D.
Executive Director
University Health Services