Dear Campus Community,

On Sunday, Feb. 25, a student at nearby Smith College in Northampton was diagnosed with a bacterial meningitis infection and is hospitalized. The student did not attend classes at UMass through the Five Colleges Consortium.

While we await testing on the bacteria to see what strain of meningitis is responsible for the student’s illness, we want to emphasize that it remains vitally important that UMass students continue to get vaccinated for meningococcal disease. To date, we have administered approximately 10,200 doses of Bexsero, the vaccine we are primarily using on campus.

We strongly urge you to come to one of the walk-in clinics this semester to continue the two-shot Bexsero vaccine series or to start the series. No appointment is necessary for these clinics. Please remember to bring your insurance card and any documentation of vaccination received at home. The upcoming clinics are:

- Tuesday, March 6, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Commonwealth Honors College Events Hall East
- Tuesday, March 20, 3-6 p.m., University Health Services Room 302
- Wednesday, April 4, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Campus Center Room 168
- Wednesday, April 25, 3-6 p.m., University Health Services Room 302

Regularly updated information about meningococcal disease at UMass can be found at www.umass.edu/meningitis. If you have additional questions or concerns, you may contact the UHS triage nurse at 413-577-5229. If these clinics do not fit into your schedule, you can call UHS at 413-577-5101 to schedule an appointment to receive the vaccine.

As you know, we had two cases of meningococcal disease on campus during the fall semester. Vaccination for our undergraduates and those who live in undergraduate housing is the best action we can take to protect you against this rare, but serious, disease.

The other Men-B vaccine, Trumenba, is also available for those who have started that three-shot series. We want to stress the importance of completing the series in order to receive the fullest protection possible. If you have yet to start the vaccination series, we encourage you to come to one of these clinics to get started.

It is very important, especially during weekend social activities, to remember these health smart tips to prevent the spread of disease as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
Do not share anything that comes in contact with the mouth – water bottles, face masks, towels, drinking glasses or cups, eating utensils, cosmetics, lip balm, toothbrushes, smoking materials, kisses, or drinks from a common source.

Wash your hands often with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

Thank you in advance for your full participation and cooperation. We appreciate you taking the steps required to keep our campus a safe and healthy place.

Sincerely,

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