Dear Campus Community,

Here is some detailed guidance if you are interested in receiving a Meningococcus B vaccine over the Thanksgiving Break by your primary care provider. We want to emphasize that the risk of invasive meningococcal disease in any individual student is very low.

The following information may be helpful to your primary care provider:

- University Health Services is vaccinating with Bexsero, which is the two-shot series, provided at least 28 days apart. The second shot can be obtained at UHS or at home, but must be the same type of vaccine.

- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has stated in this advisory that clinicians across the state consider immunizing UMass Amherst students due to the two cases and increased risk of meningococcal disease. The advisory was sent to all medical practices and facilities within the state, and is linked in this email.

- Calling your provider in advance to schedule an appointment, and providing information for ordering Bexsero to them may help. If they do not stock Bexsero, they will need to order the vaccine no later than Monday at 3 p.m. for a Tuesday overnight delivery, in order to receive vaccine during the holiday week.
  a. To order Bexsero, your provider will call GSK at (866) 475-8222.
  b. To order Trumenba, your provider will call Pfizer at (800) 666-7248

UHS will be vaccinating on next Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday during the holiday week by appointment, and again will be vaccinating by appointment beginning the Monday after the holiday. UHS stocks both brands of Meningococcus B vaccine types (Bexsero and Trumenba), and can give the necessary follow-up vaccines, no matter which vaccine your provider starts. Note that Trumenba requires three shots, the last of which is given six months after the first.

If your provider does not reside in the commonwealth of Massachusetts, he or she may not have received the advisory, but sending a copy will help to explain the situation.

Finally, I encourage you to continue observing the health smart tips that we have been publicizing to prevent the spread of meningococcal disease. These measures, recommended by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention include: Do not share anything that comes in contact with the mouth – water bottles, mouth guards, face masks, towels, drinking glasses, eating utensils, cosmetics, toothbrushes, smoking
materials, kisses, drinks from a common source such as a punch bowl. Also, please wash your hands, and cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

If you have concerns or questions, please contact the UHS triage nurse at 413-577-5229.

Have a good, healthy Thanksgiving holiday. University Health Services is here to help you now and upon your return to campus.

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, MD
Executive Director
University Health Services

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