

St. Mary's County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MENINGITIS VACCINE AVAILABLE AT COLLEGE FAIR

Vaccine is a requirement for all Maryland college students living on campus

LEONARDTOWN, MD (September 11, 2007) -- St. Mary's County Health Department is offering meningococcal disease information and vaccinations at the Southern Maryland College Fair on Tuesday, Sept. 18, at the Hollywood Fire Department from 10 a.m.– 8 p.m. Students and parents will find the vaccine clinic at the Health Connections Van parked outside.

Getting vaccinated is widely seen as a first step of getting prepared for college. Parents are encouraged to take advantage of the convenience of this opportunity to protect their students early. The vaccination is a requirement for all Maryland college students residing on campus. Menactra, the vaccine being offered, may provide protection from the disease for up to 10 years. It is also given routinely to high school freshmen and children 11-12 years of age.

(more)

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County Health Officer, William Icenhower, MD, MPH, strongly recommends meningococcal vaccination. Although rare, invasive meningococcal disease and meningitis are bacterial infections that progress rapidly and may cause sudden death or severe debilitation, such as multiple amputations, deafness, and brain damage.

Health officials note that the vaccine is safe and effective, causing local reactions for 1-2 days in 11 to 59 percent of the recipients. The cost for the vaccine at the college fair clinic will be \$89. The health department will accept credit card, cash, or check payment, and provide a receipt for insurance reimbursement. Students under age 18, must have a parent or guardian present to sign a consent for the vaccination or must bring a consent form signed by their parent or guardian with them to the clinic. Consent forms are available at the health department and in St. Mary's County High School nurses offices. For more information call the health department at 301-475-4330.

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