



General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Joint State Government Commission
Room 108 Finance Building, 613 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120
717-787-4397

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One page Summary in response to Senate Resolution 292 of 2018
Meningitis: Immunizations on Pennsylvania College and University Campuses

The threat of meningococcal disease is experienced acutely in the United States during outbreaks on college campuses. The U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), state governments, and colleges and universities have established guidelines, best practices, and laws and regulations to prevent outbreaks where possible, and to stop outbreaks when they occur. To gauge Pennsylvania's efforts to protect its population from meningococcal disease, the Senate of Pennsylvania directed that the Commission undertake a study of the Commonwealth's measures against the disease.

Current Pennsylvania law addresses the importance of meningitis immunization on college campuses by requiring its institutions of higher education to prohibit students from residing on campus unless they receive a one-time vaccination against meningococcal meningitis. As this report's data show, many universities seek compliance with the law's requirement. However, the same data reveal that compliance across the board is far from complete. More can be done to improve compliance and to further safeguard the Commonwealth's postsecondary campus student populations from meningococcal meningitis outbreaks and their occasional deadly outcomes.

Pennsylvania can ultimately learn how to achieve higher immunization rates and develop efficient outbreak response measures by reviewing the college outbreaks summarized in this report. The Commonwealth can also learn from the report's extensive review of current CDC and ACIP guidelines, as well as the emerging legislative steps other states are taking to minimize the risks of meningitis outbreaks among their own colleges and universities. Some of these efforts include educating students and their parents on the importance of immunization, improving immunization record keeping and verification, state-level review and coordination with CDC and ACIP recommendations, and improved outbreak response measures on college campuses. All of these efforts and the resources suggesting them, as well as draft legislation that would amend the College and University student Vaccination Act, are discussed within this report.

The full report is available on our website, <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/>