



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael F. Nozzolio

## Senator Nozzolio Urges Individuals to Receive Meningitis Vaccination

MICHAEL F. NOZZOLIO May 1, 2013

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New York State Senator Mike Nozzolio is urging everyone, especially high school and college students, be vaccinated for bacterial meningitis this spring. Recent warnings by the New York State Department of Health indicate that a new strain of meningitis – that is especially lethal, has been detected in New York.

“The meningitis vaccine has proven to be safe and effective and I urge everyone, to contact their doctor or healthcare provider for information regarding this lifesaving vaccination. New York State law requires health insurance plans to cover meningitis immunizations,

helping to make them affordable for all New Yorkers,” said Senator Mike Nozzolio. According to the Center for Disease Control, between 700-1,000 cases of Meningococcal disease are reported in the United States each year. Meningococcal disease is a serious disease that is fatal in 10 to 15 percent of cases. Symptoms of meningitis are often misdiagnosed as something less serious. Symptoms can resemble the flu and may include high fever, headache, stiff neck, confusion, nausea, vomiting, exhaustion, or a rash. If not detected early, the disease can progress, often within hours of the first signs of symptoms. The Center for Disease Control recommends vaccination for children 11 through 18 years of age, as well as individuals living in close quarters such as college dormitories or army barracks.

“My 21-year-old nephew Matthew died of spinal meningitis while serving aboard the USS Nassau as a Navy ROTC midshipman. Like other students who have fallen victim to this disease, Matthew was in excellent health and physical condition, and showed no signs or symptoms of illness. One day, these students were in the prime of their lives and the next, they were suddenly stricken with this terrifying disease and died,” said Senator Nozzolio. Senator Nozzolio drafted and enacted legislation that requires private and public colleges and some overnight camps to provide information about bacterial meningitis and the benefits of immunization against the disease. Senator Nozzolio’s legislation also requires that each institution distribute response forms indicating that the student has received and reviewed the information.

“We must do everything possible to protect students and make certain we have given our young people and their parents the information needed to make an educated decision about immunization against meningitis. Vaccination is incredibly important and can potentially save many lives and prevent families from having to endure the tragedy of losing a son or daughter to this terrifying disease,” said Senator Mike Nozzolio.

To learn more about meningitis, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/meningitis/index.html>

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