Dear Students and Parents,

The University Wellness Center is following closely the CDC’s recommendations about the newly approved additional vaccine used to for invasive meningococcal disease (sepsis and meningitis) caused by N. meningitidis. Roughly a third of the cases in the college student population are caused by serogroup B. The standard Menactra that we require does not have any protection against B, but does provide adequate protection for other types of bacterial meningitis.

A recent recommendation by the vaccine advisory committee of the CDC states that the serogroup B vaccine "may be administered to normal, healthy adolescents and young adults" and this recommendation is a Category B recommendation, meaning that decision is individualized by the family doctor, or by patient request. A "Category A" recommendation is more definitive - for example, students are required to get the Menactra, along with the others we require or they can't register.

There are two Meningitis B vaccines licensed in the United States. They are Trumenba (a 3 dose series) and Bexsero (a 2 dose series). The University Wellness Center recommends vaccination for serogroup B, N. meningitidis. Until there is a more definitive recommendation by the CDC, insurance plans may not pay for the MenB vaccine, at least not consistently. However, we thought it important to bring this development to your attention, so that you can ask your family doctor or the staff at the University Wellness Center about its availability and your options should you choose to receive the vaccine.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jay McDonald, MD
Medical Director, UHS
The University Wellness Center
The University of the South