

# ACTION TOOLKIT



Patti Wukovits and Alicia Stillman lost their young, healthy daughters too soon to a now vaccine-preventable disease, Meningitis B.

They need your help to spread one simple message: it takes two types of meningitis vaccines to be fully immunized against one of the most common types of bacterial meningitis, and few people have received both types of vaccines.

**Take action today.**

## ***Dear supporters and advocates,***

In 2012 and 2013, we each lost our young, healthy daughters too soon to a now vaccine-preventable disease, Meningitis B (known as MenB).

Kimberly, 17, was a high school senior and died one week before her graduation. Emily, 19, was a college sophomore and died just 36 hours after her first symptoms.

In the case of Kimberly and Emily, while both had received the MenACWY vaccine, the MenB vaccine was not yet available to help protect them from MenB. The vaccine became available in the U.S. in late 2014, but few have received it.

That is why we are coming together under the **Meningitis B Action Project** to spread the word that it takes two types of meningitis vaccines to be fully immunized against one of the most common types of bacterial meningitis, called meningococcal disease.

Our goal is to spread this critical message to every corner of the U.S. We aim to:

- Arm parents and young adults with the information to proactively talk to their healthcare provider about MenB and the vaccine available to help prevent it.
- Encourage the medical community, as well as high school, college and university administrators to talk to their patients and students about the MenB vaccine.

We can't do it alone. To achieve this goal, **WE NEED YOUR HELP.**

This brief kit will provide everything you need to get the word out in your communities, including:

- 1 Ideas** for how you can help and get involved.
- 2 Simple key messages** to reference when speaking or writing about the issue.
- 3 A press release and media pitch** to inform local press, as well as tips for working with media.
- 4 Supporting content** to bring your message to life, including brochures, posters, infographics, videos and photos.
- 5 Sample social media posts.**

We can't thank you enough for your support.



Patti Wukovits



Alicia Stillman



# PART 1

## TEN QUICK AND EFFECTIVE IDEAS TO MAKE A **BIG** DIFFERENCE

**A little work goes a long way. Here are some quick ideas for how you can help Patti and Alicia.**

- 1 Talk to your doctor.** Ask your doctor about the Meningitis B vaccine, and tell your friends and family to do the same.
- 2 Get social.** Follow us on Facebook and Twitter, and visit our website for plenty of easy-to-share resources – from educational brochures to posters, videos, graphics and more. Also, *take a look at our sample social media posts in this kit for some inspiration too.*
- 3 Ask your doctor if they would like to display posters or brochures** in their waiting rooms or consultation rooms. Need copies? Contact us!
- 4 Distribute posters and brochures in your community,** including schools, libraries and other public spaces. Need copies? You know who to ask.
- 5 Let your local newspaper and TV stations know** about the Meningitis B Action Project by using the media materials in this kit.
- 6 Word of mouth.** Next time you are sharing a meal, or talking about the latest happenings in your day, take a moment to tell your family and friends about MenB and the vaccine available to help prevent it.

**And last but certainly not least, let us help you.** Patti and Alicia are eager to share their stories to spread this important message.

- 7** Invite us to speak at a local Parent Teacher Association Meeting, a sorority or fraternity chapter meeting, or other community groups and events.
- 8** Contact us to participate in a local health event or fair.
- 9** Host a local walk or run in partnership with the Meningitis B Action Project.
- 10** Contact us for partnership or sponsorship opportunities.

**And that is just the beginning. Have other ideas?**

You can always reach us at [info@meningitisbactionproject.org](mailto:info@meningitisbactionproject.org).



## **PART 2**

### **KEY MESSAGES**

*These messages include key information to help you communicate consistently and effectively when writing or speaking about the issue.*

#### **What is meningococcal disease?**

- Meningococcal disease is one of the most common types of bacterial meningitis. It is a life-threatening bacterial infection that can affect the lining of the brain and spinal cord, or it can cause an infection in the bloodstream – or both.

#### **What causes meningococcal disease?**

- It is caused by 5 types of meningococcal bacteria: ABCWY
- It is easy to spread from person to person. For example, it can spread by sharing anything that comes in contact with saliva, being in close quarters, being sneezed or coughed upon and kissing.

#### **Who is at risk?**

- It is more common than you think. Meningococcal disease affects all ages, and it can occur anywhere. It is more common among those 16-23.

#### **What happens if you get it?**

- It can attack without warning, and early symptoms can often be mistaken for the flu.
- It can kill in a matter of hours, or cause permanent complications, including brain damage, hearing loss, learning disabilities or limb amputations.

#### **How can you help prevent it?**

- It takes two types of meningitis vaccines to be fully immunized against meningococcal disease: MenACWY and MenB.
- MenACWY is recommended for 11-12 year olds, with an important booster shot at 16. Most have received it.
- MenB is suggested for 16-23 year olds, preferably 16-18 year olds. Few have received it.

#### **What is the problem?**

- While most have received the MenACWY vaccine, MenB just recently became available in the U.S. as of late 2014 and few have received it.
- If a person has not received both vaccines, they are not fully immunized against meningococcal disease.

#### **What can you do about it?**

- Ask your doctor today if you or your child has received both vaccines, including the Meningitis B vaccine, and spread the message in your community.
- Visit [MeningitisBActionProject.org](http://MeningitisBActionProject.org) for more information.

## PART 3

### MEDIA MATERIALS AND TIPS

*Local media can be a helpful tool to educate the community. You may share these media materials with your local newspapers, and television and radio stations. A few tips are also included to help you get started.*

#### **IMPORTANT:**

Should you receive any media inquiries and interview requests, please forward those inquiries to [info@meningitisbactionproject.org](mailto:info@meningitisbactionproject.org). Both Patti and Alicia are available for interviews.



# PRESS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **TWO MOTHERS AFFECTED BY MENINGITIS B LAUNCH THE MENINGITIS B ACTION PROJECT TO PUT A STOP TO THE VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASE**

**After losing their daughters to Meningitis B, the mothers are joining forces to make sure other parents don't needlessly suffer the same fate**

The Meningitis B Action Project is a cross-country campaign initiated by two mothers who each lost their young, healthy daughters to Meningitis B. The Project aims to provide parents and young adults with the information to proactively talk to their healthcare provider about Meningitis B and the vaccine available to help prevent it, and to encourage the medical and education community to inform patients and students about the availability of the Meningitis B vaccine.

Meningococcal disease, one of the most common types of bacterial meningitis, is a life-threatening bacterial infection caused by 5 types of meningococcal bacteria – A, B, C, W, and Y.<sup>1</sup> It affects all ages, but is more common among 16-23 year olds.<sup>2</sup> Meningitis B accounts for nearly 50% of all meningococcal disease cases among 17-22 year olds in the U.S.,<sup>3</sup> and 100% of all meningococcal disease outbreaks on college campuses in the U.S. since 2011.<sup>4</sup> More than 45 college campuses have reported cases of meningococcal disease since 2013.<sup>5</sup>

Two separate meningitis vaccines, MenACWY and MenB, are necessary to be fully immunized against the disease. The MenACWY vaccine is recommended for 11-12 year olds, with a booster shot at 16. The MenB vaccine is suggested for 16-23 year olds, preferably at 16 through 18 years old,<sup>6</sup> and only recently became available in the U.S. in late 2014. However, while most adolescents and young adults have received the MenACWY vaccine, few have received the MenB vaccine largely due to lack of awareness of its availability.

The Project is a joint initiative by Patti Wukovits and Alicia Stillman who each lost their daughters to Meningitis B. High school senior Kimberly Coffey, 17, died one week before her graduation. College sophomore Emily Stillman, 19, died just 36 hours after her first symptoms. While both had received the MenACWY vaccine, the MenB vaccine was not yet available to help protect them. In 2014, Patti, a registered nurse, and Alicia, an accountant, each established their own foundations named after their daughters, The Kimberly Coffey Foundation and The Emily Stillman Foundation. Today, both mothers are joining forces to make sure other parents don't needlessly suffer the same fate.

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<sup>1</sup> Pinto VB, Burden R, Wagner A, Moran EE, Lee C. The Development of an Experimental Multiple Serogroups Vaccine for Neisseria meningitidis. PLoS ONE. 2013; 8(11): 1-10

<sup>2</sup> Age as a Risk Factor. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/meningococcal/about/risk-age.html>

<sup>3</sup> Division of Bacterial Diseases, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, CDC, unpublished data, 2013

<sup>4</sup> Epidemic Intelligence Service, CDC

<sup>5</sup> Meningococcal Disease on U.S. College Campuses, 2013-2017, 2017 National Meningitis Association. <http://www.nmaus.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/College-Cases-Map.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Meningococcal Vaccination: What Everyone Should Know. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/mening/public/index.html>.

“I lost my 17-year-old daughter Kimberly to Meningitis B in 2012, two years before Meningitis B vaccines became available in the U.S. When the doctor in the Emergency Room told me she suspected my daughter had bacterial meningitis, I told the doctor it wasn’t possible because she had been vaccinated against meningitis,” said Wukovits. “But what I didn’t know, and what so many parents still don’t realize, is that there is a separate strain of meningococcal disease – MenB – that is not covered by the traditional, more widely-known meningitis vaccine.”

“If I didn’t know, I’m sure other people don’t know. I said to her that day, I’m going to figure this out. By educating both parents and students on Meningitis B, its symptoms, and the vaccine to help stop it, we have the ability to save other young people from this deadly, but preventable disease,” said Stillman.

As part of the Project, Wukovits and Stillman will travel the country to share their stories across communities, schools and college campuses. Educational resources and tools, including a full action kit, and educational brochure, posters, and shareable videos and graphics, are available for download on the Project’s website to help individuals and organizations spread the word.

“We realize that if we want everyone to hear this critical message about Meningitis B, we can’t do it alone. Through the Meningitis B Action Project, our hope is that we will be able to build an army of advocates to help us spread our message as broadly as possible,” said Wukovits.

To get involved and learn more about the Meningitis B Action Project, visit [MeningitisBActionProject.org](http://MeningitisBActionProject.org).

## **About the Meningitis B Action Project**

The Meningitis B Action Project is a joint initiative by two mothers who each lost their young, healthy daughters too soon to a now vaccine-preventable disease, Meningitis B. The project aims to arm parents and young adults with the information to proactively talk to their healthcare provider about Meningitis B and the vaccine available to help prevent it, and to encourage the medical community, and school, college and university administrators to inform patients and students about the availability of the Meningitis B vaccine. Learn more at [MeningitisBActionProject.org](http://MeningitisBActionProject.org).

**Press Contact:**  
**[info@meningitisbactionproject.org](mailto:info@meningitisbactionproject.org)**

# MEDIA PITCH FOR THE GENERAL COMMUNITY

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## **Subject: A Potentially Life Saving Message for Local Parents about Meningitis B**

Two mothers, Patti Wukovits and Alicia Stillman, who lost their young, healthy daughters to a now vaccine-preventable disease, Meningitis B, are urging parents to ask their family doctor one simple question: **Has my child received the two types of meningitis vaccines required to be fully immunized against meningococcal disease, including the Meningitis B vaccine?**

Meningococcal disease, one of the most common types of bacterial meningitis, is a life-threatening bacterial infection that can affect the lining of the brain and spinal cord, or it can cause an infection in the bloodstream – or both. It can attack without warning and kill in a matter of hours. It is more common among those 16-23.

It is caused by 5 types of meningococcal bacteria: ABCWY, and two types of meningitis vaccines are required to be fully immunized against it: MenACWY and MenB.

**The problem?** While most have received the MenACWY vaccine, **few have received the MenB vaccine.** It became available in the U.S. in late 2014.

Patti and Alicia have launched the *Meningitis B Action Project* to make sure other parents don't needlessly suffer the same fate. I am helping them spread this important message.

You may find more information on their website: [MeningitisBActionProject.org](http://MeningitisBActionProject.org).

If you are interested in speaking with Patti and Alicia, please contact [info@meningitisbactionproject.org](mailto:info@meningitisbactionproject.org).

Thank you in advance for your attention,  
[INSERT NAME]

# MEDIA PITCH FOR COLLEGES

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## **Subject: A Potentially Life Saving Message for Students about Meningitis B**

Since 2013, more than 45 college campuses reported cases of one of the most common types of bacterial meningitis, called meningococcal disease.

**Why?** Because a person is not fully immunized against it unless they've received two types of meningitis vaccines – MenACWY and MenB. Few have received both. Plus, it is more common among those 16-23.

Two mothers, Patti Wukovits and Alicia Stillman, who lost their young, healthy daughters to a now vaccine-preventable disease, Meningitis B, are urging students to ask their doctor a simple question: **Have I received the two types of meningitis vaccines required to be fully immunized against meningococcal disease, including Meningitis B?**

Meningococcal disease, one of the most common types of bacterial meningitis, is a life-threatening bacterial infection that can affect the lining of the brain and spinal cord, or it can cause an infection in the bloodstream – or both. It can attack without warning and kill in a matter of hours.

Patti and Alicia have launched the *Meningitis B Action Project* to make sure other parents don't needlessly suffer the same fate. I am helping them spread this important message.

You may find more information on their website: [MeningitisBActionProject.org](http://MeningitisBActionProject.org).

If you are interested in speaking with Patti and Alicia, please contact [info@meningitisbactionproject.org](mailto:info@meningitisbactionproject.org).

Thank you in advance for your attention,  
[INSERT NAME]



# MEDIA TIPS

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**Make it easy.** It is best to reach out to local media via email. Your email should include a short introductory note explaining why you are reaching out to them (see media pitch), as well as the press release copied and pasted within the body of the email (not attached).

**Target your pitch.** Look for a journalist who has previously covered health as they are more likely to be interested in the story. You can do so by searching relevant key terms on the media outlet's website. If you are not able to find their email address, visit the outlet's website for a general editorial email address, or contact their editorial desk via phone.

**Find a local angle.** Creating a local angle can help get the attention of local media, so it's important to target your outreach accordingly:

Some local angles can include:

- Your community or college campus has been affected by Meningitis B, or Meningitis in general.
- Patti and Alicia are based in your state – Patti is from New York and Alicia is from Michigan.
- You hold a position or are involved in an organization where Meningitis B Awareness is important – such as a health organization, Parent Teacher Association, head of a sorority or fraternity, president of a student organization, etc.

A few ways to localize your pitch are included below:

- Change the headline of the media pitch.  
***For example: NY mother urges parents to talk to their doctor about Meningitis B.***
- Make your role clear in your introductory email.  
***For example: My name is Emma Smith and I am the Director of the Parent and Teacher Association in Miami and I am writing to make you aware of an important issue for parents.***
- Integrate local stats in your media pitch.  
***For example: There have been 4 college campuses affected by Meningitis B in Pennsylvania.***

**Make the story visual and provide extras.** Help them enhance the story by providing helpful links to photos, videos, graphics and fact sheets. You can direct them to [meningitisbactionproject.org](http://meningitisbactionproject.org) for these resources.

# PART 4

## SHAREABLE RESOURCES

### RESOURCES

On our social channels and website, you can find several resources to share – be it on your own social media channels, or in print.

#### EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS



#### INFOGRAPHICS



#### POSTERS



IMPORTANT: Stay tuned to our website for frequent content updates.

### SOCIAL POSTS

Suggested posts, tweets and more to help you get the word out

Remember to always use the hashtag **#MeningitisBActionProject** in every social post!

- 1 I stand with Meningitis B Prevention. Know. Act. Prevent. [meningitisbactionproject.org](http://meningitisbactionproject.org)
- 2 Ask your doctor about preventing Meningitis B. Know. Act. Prevent. [meningitisbactionproject.org](http://meningitisbactionproject.org)
- 3 Did you know it takes two types of meningitis vaccines to be fully immunized against one of the most common types of bacterial meningitis and few have received both? Pass it on and visit [meningitisbactionproject.org](http://meningitisbactionproject.org) to learn more
- 4 More than 45 college campuses have reported cases of meningococcal disease between 2013-2017. Get informed on this vaccine-preventable disease: [meningitisbactionproject.org](http://meningitisbactionproject.org)
- 5 Two mothers lost their young healthy daughters to a now vaccine-preventable disease – Meningitis B. Help them spread the word. Get involved: [meningitisbactionproject.org](http://meningitisbactionproject.org)

# WHERE YOU CAN **FIND US**



**MeningitisBActionProject.org**



**/MeningitisBActionProject**



**@MenBAction**



**info@MeningitisBActionProject.org**