April 24, 2018

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

Five years ago, we lost our young, healthy daughters too soon to a largely vaccine-preventable disease, Meningitis B (MenB). 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.

Today, on World Meningitis Day, we, along with our partners and supporters, remember the lives of our daughters and the countless other lives lost to, or affected by meningitis, and raise our voices to ensure no other parent or family needlessly suffers the same fate.

On this important day, to bring this issue to the forefront, we have joined with Congressman Erik Paulsen (MN) and Congressman Mike Bishop (MI) to introduce a House resolution to formally recognize April 24th as National Meningitis B Awareness Day.

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 is mainly caused by 5 types of meningococcal bacteria - ABCWY.

It is easy to spread, can attack without warning, and can kill in a matter of hours. It is more common among those 16-23 and has affected more than 46 college campuses in the U.S. since 2013.

Two separate meningitis vaccines are necessary to help protect against the disease.

Vaccination for serogroups A, C, W, and Y is routinely recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and is widely mandated by college campuses. However, the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that decisions to vaccinate 16-23 year olds against serogroup B meningococcal disease should be made at the individual level with health care providers.

As a result, while most have received the MenACWY vaccine, few have received the MenB vaccine due to lack of awareness. This lack of information around Meningitis B and the vaccine available to help prevent it stops today.

Furthermore, as with vaccination for serogroups A, C, W, and Y, it is critical that Meningitis B vaccination be routinely recommended for 16-23 year olds, and where possible, mandated on college campuses.

Policy makers, healthcare providers and school administrators must be made aware of the importance of Meningitis B prevention because parents and young adults have the right to know. It could save their lives.
We are writing to request your support in raising awareness of Meningitis B and ensuring broader access to the vaccine available to help prevent it.

We are committed to spreading our message far and wide. Please help us ensure that no other young life is unnecessarily lost to Meningitis B by conveying this important message to your constituents. Know. Act. Prevent.

Sincerely,

Patti Wukovits
Co-Founder
Meningitis B Action Project

Alicia Stillman
Co-Founder
Meningitis B Action Project

Supporters of the Meningitis B Action Project