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## **MOMS, DOCTORS, NURSES CALL FOR KIDS AND PARENTS TO BE AWARE OF DANGERS OF DEADLY MENINGITIS B**

*N.Y. Senate and Assembly dedicate June 12-16th to raise awareness, honor fifth anniversary of Long Island teenager's death*

**(Massapequa Park, N.Y.)** Today, the Kimberly Coffey Foundation and the Medical Society of the State of New York came together to urge parents and their children to protect themselves from Meningitis B—a potentially deadly, but vaccine preventable disease.

June 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> has been declared Meningitis B Awareness Week by both the New York State Senate and the New York Assembly. The [resolutions](#), offered by Senator Kemp Hannon (R-6<sup>th</sup> District) and Assemblywoman Aileen Gunther (D-100<sup>th</sup> District) recognize the work of the Kimberly Coffey Foundation to raise awareness among the public and health care professionals about Meningitis B, its symptoms, and the available vaccines that are required to prevent the disease.

June 15, 2017 marks the fifth anniversary of Kimberly's death. Her mother, Patti Wukovits, R.N. started the Kimberly Coffey Foundation in honor of her daughter. Kim was just 17 years old and days away from her high school graduation when she contracted the disease. Kimberly had been fully vaccinated against four of the five strains of meningococcal disease, but at the time, there was no vaccine to prevent against the "B" serogroup. Kim went from being a healthy teenager to being on life support in a matter of hours. After several days in ICU, Kim lost her battle with the disease. She was buried in the prom dress she never got to wear.

Wukovits has made it her life's mission to keep this from happening to another family.

“We didn’t have a chance to protect Kim because the vaccine for the B serogroup simply didn’t exist in 2012. Kim was up to date on all her vaccinations, and I know she would be alive if that vaccine had been available at the time. Now, everyone can be protected, but we need to make sure everyone is aware of the difference in the vaccines and makes sure they are fully vaccinated.” said Wukovits.

There is one meningococcal vaccine which helps protect against the A, C, W & Y strains of the disease. A separate vaccine is necessary to help protect against MenB. Individuals must have both vaccines to have maximum protection against all 5 serogroups.

The Kimberly Coffey Foundation and the Medical Society of the State of New York both played pivotal roles in helping pass legislation to protect New York kids from Meningitis. In 2015, Governor Cuomo signed into law legislation that added vaccinations for meningitis to the standard vaccination schedule for 7th and 12th graders. It went into effect in September 2016.

“The importance of vaccines begins in infancy and continues right through adulthood and MSSNY is committed to ensuring that all individuals receive immunizations,” said William Spencer, M.D., a pediatric otolaryngologist and Suffolk County Legislator (18<sup>th</sup> District). “In 2015, MSSNY helped to successfully advocate for a law that required children entering 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades in all public and private schools in New York State be fully vaccinated against meningococcal disease types A, C, W and Y in order to attend school. The law does not require immunization of the Serogroup B meningococcal vaccine, but this vaccine *is* available for teens and young adults.”

Vaccines to prevent MenB were approved by the FDA in 2014, but to date have only been given a “permissive” recommendation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This means that the “B” vaccines are not part of the standard vaccination schedule, but can be requested by individuals. The preferred age for getting the vaccination is 16-18 years old. Because of this discrepancy, many people may not be aware of the need for the additional “B” vaccine.

The “B” vaccine is recommended in high risk or outbreak situations.

The MenB strain of the disease accounts for 50 % of meningitis diagnosed in people between age 17-23, according to data released by the CDC.

MenB has been responsible for outbreaks on college campuses across the country, including Rutgers University, Providence College, Yale University, Princeton University and the University of Oregon, where one student died from the disease.

For more information on the Kimberly Coffey Foundation and MenB go to:  
[www.KimberlyCoffeyFoundation.org](http://www.KimberlyCoffeyFoundation.org).

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