



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION
February 10, 2011

CONTACT: José A. Álvarez (619) 515-6635
(619) 964-1526 cell

MENINGITIS SURVIVOR: DISEASE CHANGED MY LIFE FOREVER *Joins Health Officials to Urge Parents to Vaccinate Preteens and Teens*

WHAT: A meningitis survivor will join local health officials to encourage parents to immunize their adolescent children with all the recommended vaccines, including the vaccine against meningococcal meningitis, a bacterial disease that can kill a healthy young person in one day.

Jonathan Deguzman, a college student, will share his story of survival and talk about how he lost his fingers and feet to bacterial meningitis and how the disease “changed my life forever.”

WHO: **Wilma Wooten**, M.D., M.P.H., Public Health Officer, County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA)
Dale Parent, Special Projects Nurse, San Diego Unified School District
Jonathan DeGuzman, meningitis survivor

WHEN: **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2011 AT 10:30 A.M.**

WHERE: **Health and Human Services Agency**
1700 Pacific Highway, San Diego

WHY: Every year, about 1,000 to 2,600 people get meningococcal disease in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In San Diego County, an average of 11 cases of meningococcal disease is reported annually.

About 10-15 percent of people who get meningococcal disease die. Death rates are up to five times higher among teenagers and college adults. Another 11-19 percent of people infected with meningococcal meningitis lose their arms or legs, become deaf, develop problems with their nervous systems or suffer seizures or strokes.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but it is most common in teenagers ages 15-19 and college freshmen who live in dormitories. Other factors believed to put healthy adolescents at greater risk for meningitis infection include sharing drinking glasses, eating utensils, or water bottles; kissing; smoking; and living in close quarters.

The CDC recommends that preteens and teens—11 to 18 years of age—receive one dose of the meningococcal disease vaccine.

February 13-19, 2011 is *Preteen Vaccine Week*, a time for parents to make sure their children have all the recommended vaccines, which include meningitis, whooping cough booster, influenza, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), and chickenpox.

HHSA has partnered with the California School Nurses Organization's *Voices of Meningitis* campaign to reinforce that vaccination is the best protection available against the disease.

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COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 208 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92101-2472