

# A Follow-Up Survey of Nebraska Colleges Regarding Compliance with Legal Requirements for Meningococcal Immunization Education

Collin J Amundson\*, Linda K Ohri\*, Susan R Weston#

Creighton University – School of Pharmacy and Health Professions\* and Student Health Services#

## Purpose & Objectives

- Learn about college compliance with Nebraska state law on meningococcal disease and immunization education
- Assist college personnel to identify barriers and solutions to achieve compliance with state law, and to optimize student and family education on meningococcal disease and immunization options
- Conduct a follow-up telephone survey of colleges with on campus housing previously contacted through a survey and toolkit mailing

## Nebraska State Law

### STATE UNIVERSITY, STATE COLLEGES, AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION:

R.R.S. Neb. § 85-902. Information on meningococcal disease; requirements.

- Beginning with school year 2003-04, each postsecondary educational institution shall provide to each newly enrolled student who will reside in on campus housing and the student's parent or guardian:
  - Detailed information on the risks associated with the potentially fatal meningococcal disease;
  - the availability and effectiveness of a vaccine against the disease;
  - a recommendation that each student receive the meningococcal vaccination; and
  - information on the availability of an indigent patient fund to assist qualified persons with the cost of the vaccine.
- Each postsecondary educational institution shall request a confirmation signed by the student, parent, or guardian that the information provided has been received and reviewed.

## Methods

### Spring 2017

- The Immunization Task Force (ITF) sent a Spring 2017 mailing to 23 Nebraska colleges. The mailing reminded college administrators and health personnel of Nebraska law requiring colleges to inform entering students about meningococcal meningitis and its prevention through immunization.
- The mailing indicated the ITF interpretation that this education currently applies to educating on both the ACWY conjugate and the serogroup B vaccines.
- Toolkit materials to assist college personnel were provided in the mailed packet and were made available electronically on the ITF website ([www.ImmunizeNebraska.org](http://www.ImmunizeNebraska.org))

### Spring 2018

- In 2018, health or housing personnel at 22 of these institutions were again surveyed via a semi-structured telephone survey. This interview addressed questions regarding current practice and likely barriers where full compliance with the law was lacking.
- A semi-structured interview format was used to engage the contact in conversation about recent changes made to their communications with students on meningitis prevention and to offer assistance to overcome identified barriers.
- Strategies for achieving compliance with state law were explored and expanded. Toolkit materials were subsequently provided via email.

## Findings

Figure 1. Meningococcal Disease on U.S. College Campuses, 2013-2017

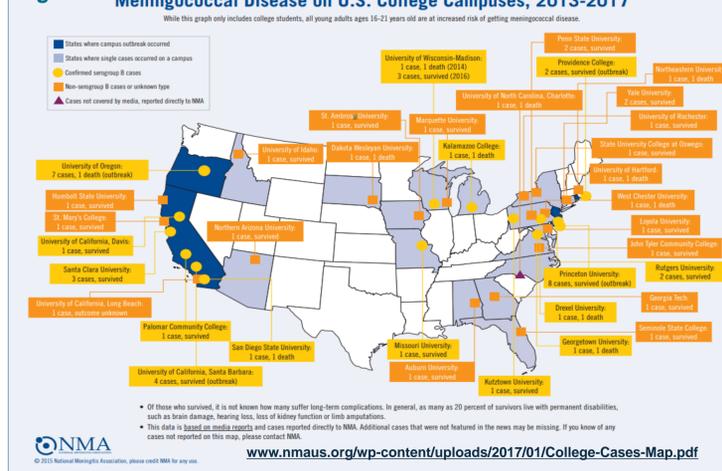


Figure 2: Student education requires confirmation of having reviewed provided information

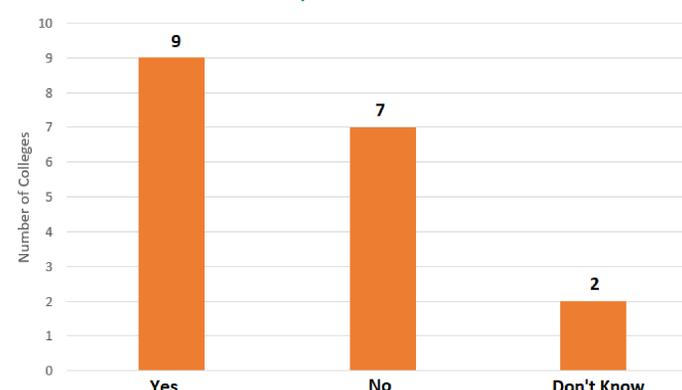


Figure 3. Nebraska College Sites – Survey Contacts

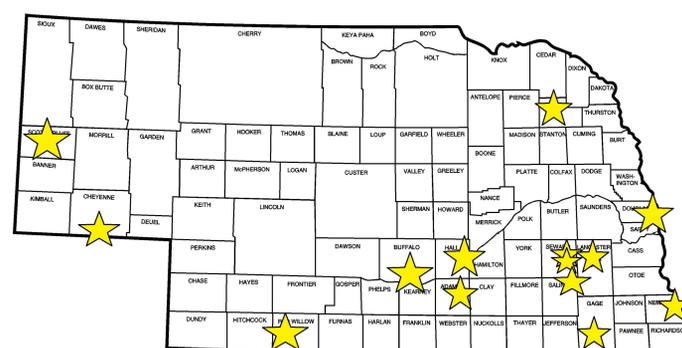
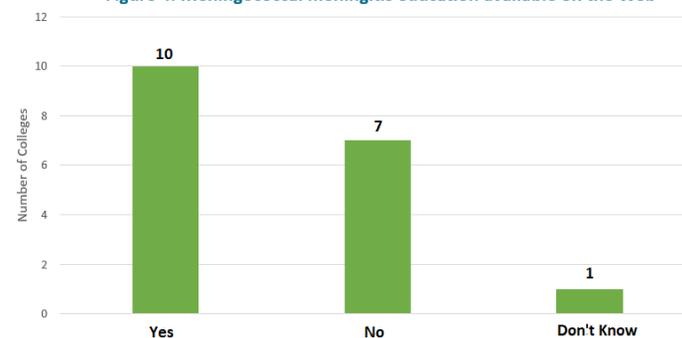


Figure 4: Meningococcal meningitis education available on the Web



## Discussion

Interviews with 82% (18/22) of the colleges were conducted.

15 (83%) of the 18 institutions indicated they were providing education access on Meningococcal A/C/W/Y disease and vaccine, while 8 (44%) included Meningococcal Type B in their information.

Of those providing information, only 4 (22%) required confirmation from their matriculating students of having received and reviewed information on both vaccines. Figure 2 demonstrates the interviewee's statement regarding the confirmation requirement, even if only addressing the A/C/W/Y conjugate.

As reported by college personnel, factors that influenced the colleges' improvements in meningococcal vaccine education included: the ITF mailing, ACIP recommendations, American College Health Association (ACHA) guidelines, compliance with state law, and an educational program from the University of Wisconsin-Madison about their meningitis outbreak in 2016.

According to the survey, NE colleges use a variety of strategies to teach students about meningitis disease and vaccines, including health forms, brochures, CDC information, health portals, nurse teaching, resident adviser teaching, and National Meningitis Association (NMA) videos.

Nine reported using mail to distribute educational materials, 9 reported using the web, and 5 reported using email. Ten institutions reported display of educational information on their websites for parents and students, demonstrated by Figure 4. Contacts from 7 colleges reported requiring A/C/W/Y vaccine for residential students; no college showed a Meningitis B vaccine requirement.

College personnel reported obstacles when attempting meningitis vaccine education, including difficulty maintaining forms, low student response rates, management decisions, and budget constraints.

Following the interview, every college representative received additional resource materials on compliance with NE law regarding meningococcal education.

## Implications for Practice

Information provided by these colleges to their entering students increased over the course of the two-phase project. While moderate progress has been made, there remains substantial room for improvement in college education about meningococcal A/C/W/Y and B vaccinations to meet NE legal requirements.

Continued follow-up is recommended with colleges not yet fully compliant. College representatives received additional information; continued improvement is hoped for. Follow up contacts can identify and address barriers that continue to prohibit full compliance with state law.

While many Nebraska colleges educate about the ACWY vaccine, more must educate about the B vaccine. A trend of meningitis B outbreaks has occurred recently, shown by the yellow indicators in Figure 1, an infographic from the National Meningitis Association web page. Students living in on-campus housing still may not be adequately informed about this issue upon matriculation.

## Acknowledgements

- Immunization Task Force – Metro Omaha
- Health and/or Student Life Staff at Nebraska Colleges
- Dawn Trojanowski, CU-SPAHP