**A** **HOUSE RESOLUTION**

TO URGE THE GOVERNOR, THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, THE SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY STEPS, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL, TO RAISE AWARENESS AMONG STUDENTS, PARENTS, EDUCATORS, AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS OF THE DANGERS OF MENINGITIS B, THE INCREASED RISK OF CONTRACTING AND SPREADING THE DISEASE IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS SUCH AS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CAMPUSES, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF A VACCINE TO HELP PREVENT THE CONTRACTING AND SPREAD OF THE DISEASE.

Whereas, meningococcal disease is an infection caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitides;* and

Whereas, although 1 in 10 people are carriers for this bacteria with no signs or symptoms of disease, sometimes *Neisseria meningitidis* bacteria can cause illness; and

Whereas, in the United States, there are approximately 350 to 550 cases of meningococcal disease that occur each year; and

Whereas, 10 to 15 infected individuals out of 100 will die even when treated, while about 11 to 19 out of every 100 people who survive will suffer from serious morbidity, including loss of limbs and impacts to the nervous system; and

Whereas, infants, preteens, teens, and young adults have the highest rates of meningococcal disease in the United States; and

Whereas, meningococcal disease is spread from person to person via the exchange of the bacteria through respiratory and throat secretion during close or lengthy contact; and

Whereas, community settings in which large groups of people gather, like college campuses, can increase the risk of the spread of meningococcal disease; and

Whereas, there are different serogroups of *Neisseria meningitides,* with serogroups B, C, and Y accounting for most meningococcal diseases in the United States; and

Whereas, there have been several recent outbreaks of serogroup B meningococcal disease on college campuses, with some cases resulting in death; and

Whereas, there are vaccines that help provide protection against all three common serogroups (B, C, and Y) seen in the United States; and

Whereas, vaccination for serogroups A, C, W and Y is routinely recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and

Whereas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that decisions to vaccinate adolescents and young adults 16 through 23 years of age against serogroup B meningococcal disease should be made at the individual level with health care providers; and

Whereas, it is critical to protecting student health, as well as the health of educators and administrators, for each private and public high school, college, and university to provide information to students and parents about meningococcal disease, explaining the different disease serogroups, symptoms, risks, and treatment options. Such information should include a notice of availability, benefits, risks, and limitations of all meningococcal vaccines receiving a recommendation from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, including Category A and Category B recommendations, with specific information as to those persons at higher risk for the disease; and

Whereas, in light of the recent incidence of meningococcal disease, which has served as a reminder of the critical role vaccinations play in preventing this devastating disease, each private and public high school, college, and university in this State also should recommend that current and entering students receive meningococcal vaccines in accordance with current ACIP guidelines. Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives:

That the Governor, State Superintendent of Education, South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, and South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education are urged to all necessary steps, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Environmental Control, to raise awareness among students, parents, educators, and health care providers of the dangers of meningitis B, the increased risk of contracting and spreading the disease in community settings such as high school and college campuses, and the availability of a vaccine to help prevent the contracting and spread of the disease.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be provided to the Governor, the State Superintendent of Education, each member of the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, each member of the South Carolina State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, and the Director of the Department of Health and Environmental Control.

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