
Health Care Committee

HB 1827

Brief Description: Requiring information on meningitis immunization for college students.

Sponsors: Representatives Moeller, Skinner, Fromhold, Schoesler, Romero, Sullivan, Hankins, Hunt, Morrell, Delvin, Cox, Kenney, Hinkle, Linville, Wood, Cody, Dunshee, Schual-Berke, Sehlin and Simpson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires institutions of higher education to provide new students with information about meningococcal meningitis.

Hearing Date: 2/27/03

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

Meningitis is an infection and inflammation of the membranes and fluid surrounding the brain and spinal cord. Meningitis is most frequently caused by either bacteria or viruses. The bacterial variety is usually the most serious. Meningitis must be treated immediately to lessen the effects of any potential complications.

Meningococcus is a highly contagious bacterial form of meningitis. It can lead to brain damage, hearing loss, and learning disabilities. It kills about 300 people every year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that between 1991 and 1997 the number of cases of meningococcal meningitis doubled for people 15 to 24 years old. Common living situations for people in these age groups such as college dormitories, boarding schools, and military bases are at a higher risk for outbreaks of the disease. In 1999 the CDC recommended that all college students receive a vaccination for the disease.

Notifiable conditions are diseases and conditions that the Department of Health (Department) has determined are of such importance to protecting the public health that they must be reported to either a local health officer or the Department. Health care providers, laboratory directors, and health care facilities all have a duty to report occurrences of these diseases and conditions. Health care providers and facilities must report an occurrence of meningococcal meningitis to the local health department immediately and laboratories must do so within two

days.

Summary of Bill:

All postsecondary educational institutions that provide on-campus or group housing are required to provide all first-time students with information about meningococcal disease. The information shall address symptoms, risks, and treatment; recommendations to receive a vaccination; and a response form for the student to indicate that he or she has received the information, whether or not they have decided to receive the vaccination, and their signature. The schools are not required to provide the vaccination to students.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2003.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2004.