



Dear Parent/Guardian of Tapawingo Camper(s):

I am writing to inform you about meningococcal disease, a potentially fatal bacterial infection commonly referred to as meningococcal meningitis. New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) 2167 and Subpart 7-2 of the State Sanitary Code requires overnight children's camps to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all campers who attend camp for 7 or more consecutive nights.

Tapawingo is required to maintain a record for each camper, signed by the camper's parent or guardian, which documents the following:

- A response to receipt of meningococcal disease and vaccine information; AND EITHER
- A record of meningococcal meningitis immunization; OR
- An acknowledgement of meningococcal disease risks and refusal of meningococcal meningitis immunization.

Meningococcal disease is rare. However, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult. Meningococcal disease can cause serious illness such as infection of the lining of the brain and spinal column (meningitis) or blood infections (sepsis). The disease strikes quickly and can lead to severe and permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, and limb amputation, in as many as one in five of those infected. Ten to 15 percent of those who get meningococcal disease will die.

Meningococcal disease can be easily spread from person-to-person by coughing, sharing beverages or eating utensils, kissing, or spending time in close contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria. People can spread the bacteria that cause meningococcal disease even before they know they are sick.

Anyone can get meningococcal disease, but certain people are at increased risk including teens and young adults 16 – 23 years old and those with certain medical conditions that affect the immune system.

The single best way to prevent meningococcal disease is to be vaccinated. The meningococcal ACWY (MenACWY) vaccine protects against four major strains of bacteria, which cause about two-thirds of meningococcal disease in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends a single dose of MenACWY vaccine at age 11 through 12 years with a booster dose given at age 16 years. The meningococcal B (MenB) vaccine protects against a fifth strain of meningococcal bacteria, which causes about one-third of meningococcal disease. Young adults aged 16 through 23 years may be vaccinated with MenB vaccine and should discuss the MenB vaccine with a healthcare provider.

Information about the availability and cost of the vaccine can be obtained from your health care provider or your local health department. Tapawingo does not offer meningococcal immunization services.

I encourage you to carefully review the attached Meningococcal Disease Fact Sheet. It is also available on the New York State Department of Health website at: <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2168.pdf> **Please complete the Meningococcal Meningitis Vaccination Response Form via your on-line Tapawingo Account by May 1.**

To learn more about meningitis and the vaccine, please feel free to contact Joy Huseland at (518) 548-4311 ext. 903 and/or consult your child's physician. You can also find information about the disease at the website of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:

www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm.

Sincerely,

Joy Huseland
Tapawingo Director