



## **Important Notice for Chicago Providers Regarding Meningococcal Infections**

On April 15, 2008, an 18 year-old resident of the Austin neighborhood died of an infection caused by the bacteria, *Neisseria meningitidis*. The particular type of *Neisseria meningitidis* that caused the 18-year-old's death also caused the death of a 15-year-old resident of the Austin neighborhood in early March.

In addition to these two deaths, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) has identified a recent increase in the number of serious infections caused by this type of *Neisseria meningitidis* in the community areas of Austin and North Lawndale.

As you know, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that all 11 to 18-year-olds receive meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4, Menactra™) which provides protection against meningococcal infections and helps decrease its spread. The recent deaths and increasing numbers of serious infections highlight the need to aggressively implement this immunization recommendation.

CDPH is strongly encouraging 11 to 18-year-olds who reside, work, attend school, or participate in after school programs in Austin or North Lawndale to contact their health care providers and arrange to receive the shot. For those unable to obtain the vaccine from their health care provider or who lack health insurance, CDPH will be coordinating vaccination clinics in Austin and North Lawndale starting on April 24, 2008.

You may experience an increased demand for MCV4 from your patients. It is recommended that Chicago providers review their clinic's inventory of MCV4 and consider ordering additional vaccine to meet the demand.

If you have questions about this notice, please feel free to contact Dr. Julie Morita, Medical Director, CDPH Immunization Program, at 312/746-6088. For additional information about meningococcal disease and vaccine, visit [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/mening/default.htm) or go to the [CDPH Web site](#) and click on the Meningitis button on the top right.