Senate Resolution No. 843

**BY:** Senator RIVERA

**MEMORIALIZING** Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim June 2025, as Meningitis B Awareness Month in the State of New York

**WHEREAS,** It is the custom of this Legislative Body to increase awareness of serious illnesses that affect the lives of our citizens; and

**WHEREAS,** It is the sense of this Legislative Body to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim June 2025, as Meningitis B Awareness in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Meningitis Month; and

**WHEREAS,** Meningococcal disease, more commonly referred to as bacterial meningitis, is any infection caused by the bacterium Neisseria meningitidis; and

**WHEREAS,** Meningococcal disease is uncommon; however, when it strikes, its flu-like symptoms make diagnosis difficult; and

**WHEREAS,** 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 or permanent disabilities, such as hearing loss, brain damage, seizures, limb amputation or even lead to death within 24-48 hours; 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,** There are different strains of bacterial meningitis, including serogroups A, C, W, Y, and B, and vaccines exist to help provide protection against all the serogroups commonly seen in the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** The single best way to help prevent all common strains of meningococcal disease is to be vaccinated with both a MenACWY vaccine and a separate MenB vaccine; and

**WHEREAS,** Meningococcal disease is spread from person to person via the exchange of the bacteria through respiratory and throat secretions during close or lengthy contact, such as sharing beverages or eating utensils, kissing, or spending time in close contact with someone who is sick or who carries the bacteria; 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,** Because of the way meningitis is spread, through close

personal contact, and that the social behavior of young adults ages 16-23 increases their risk of contracting the disease; students in dormitory settings and crowded events, are particularly vulnerable to meningococcal disease; and

**WHEREAS,** While vaccines for serogroups A, C, W, and Y have been available for many years, prior to 2014, there were no vaccines available for serogroup B; and

**WHEREAS,** Despite the existence of a serogroup B vaccine, meningitis B has been responsible for all U.S. college campus outbreaks since 2011, with some cases resulting in death; and

**WHEREAS,** Because the B strain of meningitis requires a new, separate vaccination, students heading to college may mistakenly think that if they received the MenACWY vaccine that they are protected against all strains and may not realize they are not protected against the B strain; and

**WHEREAS,** According to the Centers for Disease Control, Neisseria meningitidis serogroup B accounts for approximately half of all meningococcal cases among persons aged 16-23 years in the U.S.; 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 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 through shared clinical decision making; and

**WHEREAS,** In accordance with ACIP recommendations, Chapter 401 of the Laws of 2015, requires that as of September 1, 2016, children in grades 7 through 12 be immunized against meningococcal disease strains A, C, W, and Y; and

**WHEREAS,** New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) º 2167 requires institutions, including colleges and universities, to distribute information about meningococcal disease and vaccination to all students meeting the enrollment criteria, whether they live on or off campus; and

**WHEREAS,** While New York State Law does not require vaccination against serogroup B meningococcal disease, young adults aged 16-23 may choose to receive the MenB vaccine series, and are encouraged to discuss the MenB vaccine with a healthcare provider; and

**WHEREAS,** Meningitis vaccines are covered by public and private insurance plans, and individuals are encouraged to contact their health insurance plan to determine coverage of MenACWY and MenB vaccines; and

**WHEREAS,** The federal Vaccines for Children (VFC) and NYS Vaccines for Adults (VFA) programs will cover both MenACWY and MenB vaccines for

children and adults who have no health insurance or whose health insurance does not cover these vaccines, as well as for children less than 19 years of age who are American Indian or Alaska Native or eligible for Medicaid or Child Health Plus; and

**WHEREAS,** Kimberly Coffey was 17 and a high school senior on Long Island, who had been vaccinated with the MenACWY, when she died from meningitis B in 2012, two years before meningitis B vaccines were available in the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** Kimberly's mother, Patti Wukovits, R.N., created the Kimberly Coffey Foundation and today, this vital organization remains true to its mission in providing education to the public and health care professionals about meningococcal disease and advocating for two types of meningococcal vaccination; and

**WHEREAS,** The Kimberly Coffey Foundation's goal is to ensure that no other family will endure the loss of a child or have a loved one experience the devastating effects of meningococcal disease; and

**WHEREAS,** June 15, 2025, marks the thirteenth anniversary of Kimberly Coffey's death; and

**WHEREAS,** Students, parents, educators and health care providers need to know about all strains of meningitis and how to protect against all strains; and

**WHEREAS,** A Meningococcal Disease Fact Sheet is available on the New York State Department of Health website; and

**WHEREAS,** June is a time when students are preparing to go to college and can discuss how to become fully vaccinated with their health care provider; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED,** That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim June 2025, as Meningitis B Awareness Month in the State of New York; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York; and Patti Wukovits, R.N., Executive Director of the Kimberly Coffey Foundation.