

Senate Resolution No. 1608

**BY:** Senator RIVERA

**MEMORIALIZING** Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim June 2026, 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 2026, as Meningitis B Awareness in the State of New York; 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 five common serogroups of meningococcal meningitis in the United States, which are serogroups A, B, C, W, and Y, and multiple vaccines exist to help protect against all five serogroups; and

**WHEREAS,** The single best way to help prevent all common serogroups of meningococcal disease is to be vaccinated with both a MenACWY vaccine and a separate MenB vaccine or with a MenABCWY vaccine, if indicated; 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 and high schools, can increase the risk of the spread of meningococcal disease; and

**WHEREAS,** Because of the way meningitis is spread, through close

personal contact, 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 protection against serogroup B requires a separate vaccination, students heading to college may mistakenly think that if they received the MenACWY vaccine that they are fully protected against all serogroups and may not realize they are not protected against serogroup B; and

**WHEREAS,** According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Neisseria meningitidis serogroup B accounts for 70% of all meningococcal meningitis cases among persons aged 16-23 years in the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** Vaccination for serogroups A, C, W and Y is routinely recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics; and

**WHEREAS,** The American Academy of Pediatrics 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 the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, Chapter 401 of the Laws of 2015 in New York State requires that as of September 1, 2016, children in grades 7 and 12 be immunized against meningococcal disease serogroups A, C, W, and Y; and

**WHEREAS,** New York State Public Health Law (NYS PHL) § 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 vaccine, 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, 2026, marks the fourteenth anniversary of Kimberly Coffey's death; and

**WHEREAS**, Students, parents, educators and health care providers need to know about all serogroups of meningococcal meningitis and how to protect against all serogroups; 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 2026, 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.