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| INFORMATIONAL LETTER |
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TRANSMITTAL: 93 INF-39

TO: Commissioners of
Social Services

DIVISION: Health and
Long Term Care

DATE: September 24, 1993

SUBJECT: Meningitis Outbreak

SUGGESTED

DISTRIBUTION: Director of Social Services
Director of Medical Assistance
Staff Development Coordinator

CONTACT PERSON: See text for list of contact persons.

ATTACHMENTS: Attachment 1: NYS Dept. of Health, Bureau of
Communicable Disease Control, Fact Sheet:
"Meningococcal Meningitis" (not available on-line)
Attachment 2: "NYS Dept. of Health Communicable
Disease Reporting Requirements (not available on-line)

FILING REFERENCES

Previous ADMs/INFs	Releases Cancelled	Dept. Regs.	Soc. Serv. Law & Other Legal Ref.	Manual Ref.	Misc. Ref.

At the April 1993 meeting of the New York State Disaster Preparedness Commission, the New York State Department of Health (DOH) alerted the member state agencies regarding the meningitis outbreak in Jefferson and Oswego Counties last fall.

According to DOH staff, meningitis usually occurs sporadically in the population with an incidence of one to two cases annually per 100,000 people. However, last fall ten cases of a new strain of the disease occurred in Jefferson County, with an additional case appearing in neighboring Oswego County. This incidence is five to ten times higher than would normally be expected. Two of the ten individuals who contracted the disease died. Normally, mortality is in the five to ten percent range.

As a result of this outbreak, 45,000 individuals in the Jefferson County area were vaccinated within a three week period. The vaccine does not work with children under two years of age, and so the vaccinations were given to individuals in the over age two to age 29 group.

The Department wishes to advise local social services districts and service providers that, according to DOH, such outbreaks cannot be predicted but could reoccur this coming fall/winter. Appropriate personnel, especially those who are employed in close congregate care settings, such as family day care, day care centers and adult homes, should be alerted to the meningitis threat and provided with information to enable them to be able to recognize its symptoms. Clients with suspicious symptoms should immediately be evaluated by a physician. The attached information from the DOH Bureau of Communicable Disease Control may be useful in this regard.

Further, the New York State Sanitary Code (10 NYCRR 2.12) requires that "When no physician is in attendance, it shall be the duty of the head of a private household or the person in charge of any institution, school, hotel, boarding house, camp or vessel or any public health nurse or any other person having knowledge of an individual affected with any disease presumably communicable, to report immediately the name and address of such person to the city, county or district health officer." An information sheet on communicable disease reporting requirements is attached.

Any questions regarding the meningitis threat, including the reporting requirements for an incidence of the disease, should be addressed to your county health department or the DOH contact persons listed below:

Albany	Peter Drabkin or Stan Kondracki	(518) 474-3186
Buffalo	Greg Balzano	(716) 847-4503
New Rochelle	Rich Gallo	(914) 632-4133
New York City	Eleanor Bell (NYC Health Dept.)	(212) 788-4204
Syracuse	Martin Toly	(315) 426-7620

Sue Kelly
Deputy Commissioner
Health and Long Term Care