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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Meningococcal Vaccine Available for Ages 11-18 years of Age

Kingsford, Michigan, January, 23, 2007 - The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends routine vaccination with Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine (MCV4) for the following age groups:

- Adolescents 11-12 year old
- Adolescents at high school entry
- College freshmen that live in dormitories
- Other recommended adolescents, such as those with
 - Damaged or removed spleen
 - HIV
 - Terminal complement component deficiency
 - Plans to travel/live in parts of the world where this disease is common, such as parts of Africa
 - Possible exposure to meningitis (Not serogroup B)

Meningococcal disease is caused by bacteria that infect the bloodstream and the linings of the brain and spinal cord, causing serious illness. Every year in the United States, 1,400 to 2,800 people get meningococcal disease. Ten to 14 percent of people with meningococcal disease die, and 11-19 percent of survivors have permanent disabilities (such as mental retardation, hearing loss, and loss of limbs). The disease often begins with symptoms that can be mistaken for common illnesses, such as the flu. Meningococcal disease is particularly dangerous because it progresses rapidly and can kill within hours.

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The vaccine is highly effective. However, it does not protect people against meningococcal disease caused by “type B” bacteria. This type of bacteria causes one-third of meningococcal cases. More than half of the cases among infants aged <1 year are caused by “type B,” for which no vaccine is available in the United States. The new meningococcal vaccine was licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in people 11-55 years of age. It is manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur and is marketed as Menactra™.

For more information or to make an appointment for this vaccination, call your health care provider or the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at (906) 774-1868 or (906) 265-9913.

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