

February 2, 2015

HEALTH ADVISORY

Earlier today, the College was notified that one of our students has a confirmed case of meningococcal meningitis. The student has been admitted to a Boston hospital. The student's family is at the hospital and the student is receiving treatment.

The College has followed every protocol in dealing with this situation. We are in close contact with the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), and they will be issuing a statement later this afternoon. The College Student Health Center staff has reached out to and interviewed those students considered to be close contacts of the student who is ill. We have also provided prophylactic treatment to these students.

Meningococcal meningitis is an infection of the lining that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. The bacterial infection is spread through direct secretions from the nose or mouth through activities such as kissing, sharing food, drinks, water bottles, toothbrushes, eating utensils, or cigarettes. Meningococcal disease can be treated with antibiotics, but quick medical attention is extremely important. Vaccination is the best protection against meningococcal disease.

Meningitis may present as sudden onset of fever, headache, and stiff neck. It will often have other symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, increased sensitivity to light and altered mental status. The symptoms of bacterial meningitis can appear quickly or over several days. Typically they develop within 3-7 days of exposure.

According to the Department of Health, this disease does not spread through the air or through casual exposure, so the risk to students attending Providence College of contracting the disease is low.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kathy Kelleher, Director of Health Services at 401-865-2423.

Additional information on bacterial meningitis can be found at the Rhode Island Department of Health website (www.health.state.ri.us) as well as the website for the Center for Disease Control (www.cdc.gov).