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Meningococcal Meningitis Survivor and TV Personality Amy Purdy and Pfizer Launch Take Action Against Meningitis

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New Campaign Encourages Parents to Take a Pledge to Talk to Their Healthcare Provider About Helping to Protect Their Teen or Young Adult from Meningococcal Meningitis

Paralympic®* medalist and world class snowboarder Amy Purdy and her mother, Sheri, have teamed up with Pfizer Inc. (NYSE:PFE) to launch Take Action Against Meningitis to encourage parents to learn more about how they can help protect their teens and young adults from meningococcal meningitis. One type of invasive meningococcal disease, meningococcal meningitis, is a bacterial infection, which causes inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord.[1]

At TakeActionAgainstMeningitis.com, parents can take a pledge to talk to their healthcare provider about meningococcal meningitis protection. For each pledge, Pfizer will donate $1 – up to $20,000 - to Adaptive Action Sports, the not-for-profit organization Amy co-founded to help create opportunities for individuals with physical disabilities to get involved in action sports.

Amy, a meningococcal meningitis survivor, lost both of her legs below the knee as a result of the disease when she was 19. Pursuing her dream of becoming a world champion snowboarder, Amy medaled at the 2014 Paralympic Games and followed that with a second-place finish on TV's "Dancing with the Stars®**." Today, Amy travels the country sharing her inspirational story and encouraging others to overcome obstacles and shape the life they want.

"We all have challenges and many are surmountable. Whether it's competing in the Paralympics or on 'Dancing with the Stars,' I'm still finding new ways to challenge my own ideas about what I think I may be capable of accomplishing," said Amy Purdy. "My mom and I are excited to be part of Take Action Against Meningitis and are challenging parents to learn more about meningococcal meningitis. By going to TakeActionAgainstMeningitis.com, you can take a pledge to talk to your healthcare provider about meningococcal meningitis protection."

There are five common forms of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease -- A, C, Y, W and B.[2] Early symptoms, such as headache, nausea and vomiting can be misinterpreted as the flu, but invasive meningococcal disease can lead to death within 24 hours.[3,4] For those who survive, it can cause permanent disabilities.[5,6] Adolescents and young adults are the primary carriers of the meningococcal bacteria, meaning they may harbor the pathogen in the back of the throat, even if it does not cause them to get sick.[7,8] Typical teen and young adult behaviors, such as close-quartered living, sharing drinks and utensils, and kissing, can promote the transmission of the bacteria.[9]

“Until 2014, there was no vaccine to help protect against invasive meningococcal group B disease in the United States, which accounts for approximately 40 percent of all cases,[10]” said Richard Chung M.D., Director of Adolescent Medicine at Duke University. “Now there are vaccinations for groups A, C, Y, and W, and for group B. I’d encourage teens and their parents to talk to their healthcare provider for more information.”

Sheri Purdy, Amy’s mom, remembers the day 15 years ago when Amy called to tell her she wasn’t feeling well. Within 24 hours, Amy was hospitalized and doctors were not sure she would make it.

“While not all meningococcal meningitis patients’ stories are as extreme as Amy’s, we feel blessed to still have our daughter,” said Sheri Purdy. “This is why Amy and I have partnered with Pfizer on Take Action Against Meningitis to encourage parents to take a pledge to talk to their healthcare provider about helping to protect their teens against meningococcal meningitis.”

For more information, talk to your healthcare provider or go to TakeActionAgainstMeningitis.com and take the pledge.

About Meningococcal Disease

There are five common forms of bacteria that cause meningococcal disease -- A, C, Y, W and B.[2] One type of invasive meningococcal disease, meningococcal meningitis, is a bacterial infection, which causes inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord.[1]Early symptoms can be misinterpreted as the flu, but invasive meningococcal disease can lead to death within 24 hours.[3,4] For those who survive, it can cause permanent disabilities.[5,6]

Meningococcal disease affects all age groups in the U.S., but incidence is highest among infants younger than one year, adolescents and young adults, and the elderly.[11]

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** DANCING WITH THE STARS® is a registered trademark owned by the British Broadcasting Corporation.

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***This press release has accompanying multimedia that can be accessed by clicking here.

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