

For Immediate Release | February 5, 2018

## Interior Health urges Okanagan youth to get immunized before the outbreak ends

KELOWNA – Today, Interior Health advised all Okanagan residents aged 15-19 to get immunized against meningococcal disease before the outbreak is declared over.

To date, Interior Health has administered 14,486 total immunizations in the Okanagan as part of the meningococcal disease outbreak. Interior Health is reporting a lower uptake for vaccine in the 18-19 year age group, and is further urging this particular age group to get immunized while vaccine is available.

“We are extremely pleased with the response from the public to make immunization a priority, but are continuing to encourage those who have not yet been immunized to do so, especially those in the 18-19 year age group,” said Dr. Karin Goodison, Medical Health Officer. “If you know someone in the Okanagan who is in this age group, please encourage them to get immunized while vaccine is available. Immunization is one of the best ways to protect yourself against this disease.”

Free immunizations are available at health centres and select Shoppers Drug Mart and London Drugs locations. Many of these pharmacies have extended hours to accommodate immunization.

Interior Health expects to declare an end to the outbreak on February 13, assuming no additional cases of meningococcal disease are reported over the next seven days.

After the outbreak is declared over, only students in grade nine and 10 will be eligible to receive this vaccine for free at health centres. To see a full list of where to obtain the Meningococcal Quadrivalent vaccine, visit [interiorhealth.ca](http://interiorhealth.ca).

Since declaring the meningococcal disease outbreak on December 14, 2017, Interior Health’s response has been significant – from arranging thousands of doses of vaccine coming from across Canada, to scheduling clinics to offer immunizations throughout the Okanagan, to partnering with local pharmacies to administer vaccine.

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