

MEDIA ALERT - YOUTH SOCCER ENTHUSIASTS TAKE A SHOT FOR MENINGITIS PROTECTION

~ Ontario medical expert and meningococcal meningitis survivors to raise awareness about meningococcal meningitis, while informing soccer players they can get more than a red card when sharing water bottles ~

BARRIE, ON, Aug. 24 /CNW/ -

What: At this weekend's All-Star Challenge soccer tournament, an annual fun-filled event held in Barrie, soccer players and tournament spectators will learn about broad protection against meningococcal meningitis at the *Take a Shot for Meningitis Protection* booth. Michael Cross, survivor of meningococcal meningitis; Katie Grassie, mother of Keaton, who contracted meningococcal meningitis at age 9; Mary Clough, who lost her daughter Macey to meningococcal meningitis; and local physician Dr. Saul Greenberg, will be among the 3,500 players and fans, engaging children and parents alike with experiences and information to ensure Canadians remain safe from the four vaccine-preventable strains of meningococcal meningitis.

Join the fun on-site to learn about the importance of meningococcal meningitis prevention and protection, and hear personal stories from Michael, Mary, Katie and Keaton. Players and spectators will also be provided with free water bottles to help reduce the risk of transmission, be offered health tips, and can discuss broad protection in children and teens against meningococcal meningitis.

INTERVIEWS, PHOTOS and BROADCAST opportunities are available.

Who: **Michael Cross**, meningococcal meningitis survivor who contracted a vaccine-preventable strain at a youth soccer tournament in Montreal at age 16.

Katie Grassie, mother of **Keaton Grassie**, who contracted a vaccine-preventable strain of the disease at age 9, and had his lower legs amputated in order to survive.

Mary Clough, daughter **Macey** contracted meningococcal meningitis as a college student living on campus at age 19, but did not survive her battle with a vaccine-preventable strain of the disease.

Dr. Saul Greenberg, Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Community Pediatrician.

When: *Take a Shot for Meningitis Protection*, Sunday, August 29, 2010

9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

All spokespeople on-site from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Where: Barrie Sports Complex

2100 Nursery Rd

Midhurst, Ontario (close to Barrie)

L4M 3N4

Invasive Meningococcal Disease (IMD) Quick Facts:

- Meningococcal meningitis, a type of IMD, is a serious bacterial infection that can be spread from one person to another through close contact involving secretions from the nose or throat, such as sharing water bottles and kissing.
- Each week, an average of four Canadians, mostly children and teens, are infected with invasive meningococcal disease.
- Meningococcal meningitis often begins with symptoms that can be mistaken for common viral illnesses, such as the flu. Meningococcal meningitis can progress very rapidly and cause death in 24 to 48 hours.
- Four of the five common bacterial strains that cause meningococcal meningitis are vaccine-preventable (A, C, Y and W-135).
- Menactra[®] is a vaccine that protects against all four vaccine-preventable strains of IMD, and has over five years real world experience

For further information:

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