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The Family of Meningitis Survivor Jamie Schanbaum Champions Vaccination Bill in Texas State Senate April 25th to be Proclaimed as Texas Meningitis Awareness Day

(AUSTIN, TEXAS) – The family of 20-year-old Bacterial Meningitis survivor Jamie Schanbaum has watched her endure unimaginable pain and suffering since the University of Texas student contracted the disease. Yet, they have created a shining silver lining in the horrific storm with proposed state legislation, which could be voted on by the Texas State Senate as soon as today.

The Schanbaums are turning their own heartache into something positive in the form of SB 819, a bill requiring bacterial meningitis vaccinations for any first-time college student living in on-campus housing in the state of Texas. While Jamie and her family know that they are extremely fortunate that she survived the brutal disease, they want to ensure that no other families have to endure the pain and suffering they have faced over the past six months.

They have joined forces with Texas State Senator Wendy Davis (Ft. Worth, Texas) to pass the important legislation. As college campuses and, in particular, dorms are particularly conducive to the transmission of the often-fatal disease, they believe the legislation will prevent other Texas college students from contracting Bacterial Meningitis.

SB 819 was passed unanimously by the Higher Education committee on April 15, with Jamie's mother, Patsy Schanbaum and brother, Nicholas Schanbaum serving as witnesses on behalf of the bill. The legislation will now await a full senate vote.

In order to assist Jamie in spreading the message about the dangers of bacterial meningitis, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr., has sponsored a resolution naming April 25th "Texas Meningitis Awareness Day". Senator Lucio has served in the state legislature for over 22 years, representing all of Cameron, Kenedy, Kleberg, Willacy and a portion of Hidalgo counties. The Texas State Senate is establishing April 25th as Meningitis Awareness Day in order to raise awareness about the illness.

Schanbaum, a 20-year-old University of Texas student, has fought valiantly throughout the past six months, facing daily challenges a result of her contracting Meningococceimia, a rare and more violent version of the bacteria. Although the bacteria generally attack the nervous system, it infected Jamie's blood, which often leads to death. While she was fortunate to survive; the disease led to a double amputation of her legs below the knees as well as removal of most of her fingers.

With the unwavering support of her family, the 20-year-old has shown tremendous courage throughout her painful ordeal, enduring numerous surgeries, a laundry list of medications and a marathon hospital stay. A life-long Texan, Jamie and her devoted family want something positive to come from her experience. Had she been vaccinated, she could have avoided contracting Bacterial Meningitis.

While she still has several months of painstaking rehabilitation in front of her; Jamie's condition is improving daily, and she hopes to return to Austin and the University of Texas in the coming months.