



**MENINGITIS
RELIEF**

Meningitis Relief Canada (MRC)
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MRC Goes to Queen's Park for World Meningitis Day 2015 *Ontario Legislature Re-Introduces Meningitis Awareness Day Act*

April 23 - Meningitis Relief Canada (MRC) was at Queen's Park on April 22nd to mark World Meningitis Day (April 24) and raise awareness of this devastating and life-threatening disease.

MPPs wore burgundy carnations in the Legislature to mark World Meningitis Day and MPPS Indira Naidoo-Harris, John Yakabuski and Jagmeet Singh spoke in support of a private members bill to officially declare April 24 as World Meningitis Day in Ontario. MRC also met with government officials during the day to discuss the importance of meningitis public health education, prevention and support for families.

In the afternoon, MRC hosted a successful reception attended by Ontario MPPs from all parties. Furakh Mir, MRC founder and president spoke about the risks of Meningitis and their continued support for education and awareness of the disease.

"Meningitis is a disease that can affect anyone, anywhere and at any time. Within hours it can lead to lifelong disability or death" said Furakh Mir "No child should suffer devastation on account of this disease, when we can take preventative measures through education – by knowing the signs and symptoms and seeking urgent medical attention and through immunization," Mir added.

MRC is a registered charity, founded by Furakh Mir, of Brampton Ontario. Mir started the organization after her newborn son was misdiagnosed twice, at both her local hospital and walk-in clinic, before being properly diagnosed and treated for bacterial meningitis at Sick Kids Hospital in 2011.

Meningitis is an inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord, and Bacterial Meningitis often afflicts young children. It appears suddenly, and its symptoms can be mistaken for the flu. Without diagnosis and proper treatment it can result in death or long-term disability.

MRC's mission is to raise awareness and promote education among the public and healthcare professionals to prevent death and disability from meningitis. The charity is dedicated to supporting individuals and families who have been afflicted by the disease with counselling, financial aid and other services. To date MRC has assisted dozens of families with financial support for hospital expenses, respite care, medical equipment, therapy and funeral expenses.

Quotes

"I'm proud to be a co-sponsor of the *Meningitis Awareness Day Act*. Meningitis is a truly devastating disease that has personally impacted the lives of so many people in Ontario.



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Raising public awareness and focusing our resources to combat this deadly disease will help us to protect residents and diminish future suffering."

– Indira Naidoo-Harris, MPP Halton

"Early detection and recognizing the signs and symptoms are key with Meningitis. It's so important that we're better informed and more aware of the dangers and that's why I strongly support recognizing April 24 as World Meningitis Day in Ontario."

- Jagmeet Singh, MPP Bramalea-Gore-Malton

"Our own daughter had a very close call with Meningitis in her youth. I know how close we came to losing her and believe that anything we can do to promote greater awareness is worth supporting. I deeply appreciated the work that MRC does to directly support families who have been impacted."

- John Yakabuski, MPP Renfrew-Nippising-Pembroke

QUICK FACTS

- Meningitis is an inflammation of the membranes (meninges) surrounding the brain and spinal cord. It claims the lives of close to 1,000 Canadians each year – most being young people. Those who survive may face long-term disability, such as hearing loss, neurological damage, or even amputation.
- Held every year on April 24th, World Meningitis Day is recognised globally to raise the profile of meningitis, emphasise the importance of vaccination, and to provide support to those dealing with the consequences of the disease.

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