



William Perry graduated from Crean Lutheran High School in 2017. He played goalkeeper for the Saints soccer team and served on the Hope for Haiti medical Mission trip his sophomore and junior years. He was in the Engineering Cohort Program, and interned with the Army Corp of Engineers in Champaign, Illinois. Currently, William studies Chemical Engineering at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania and rows on the University Crew Team.

This November William and a fellow crew team member contracted the virulent meningitis B strain. God's presence was evident through the episode and both young men survived, however, the Perry family desires to share what they learned through the ordeal.

From Nancy and Stephen Perry:

Dear Crean Lutheran Families,

We want to share what we did not know, with the hope that your college bound students will avoid this difficult experience. Both our son and his team mate were up to date on their recommended vaccinations, however, through this ordeal we learned that there are two meningitis vaccinations; the ACWY vaccine and the meningitis B vaccine. Typically, the ACWY vaccine is administered prior to college with the meningitis B vaccine being less available due to cost and shelf life. Doctors do not routinely give it to 18-year-olds. Meningitis most commonly occurs in college settings where living quarters are close and hygiene is not the best. The doctors informed us, once the boys were "out of the woods," that the mortality rate for this strain of meningitis is around 50%. The strain being so perilous that five state health departments were tracking the cases and any individuals having come in contact with the boys.

The young men developed different symptoms within a few days of each other. A cough, nausea, fever and fatigue indications appeared to be like those of a cold or flu, and in fact was diagnosed during the first of several ER visit as bronchitis. By the time the extreme headache, rash, stiff neck, and high fever appeared, the infection had established itself. The other one was found unconscious after a day of stomach-flu symptoms. Eventually both of these young, athletic college students had to be treated in the ICU with IV antibiotics to battle both meningitis and sepsis, as well as organ failure. Hours can make the difference in survival. Complications can continue for months. We are thankful our son is back at Bucknell, however, with physical limitations. His friend continues to recover at home and is unable to complete his fall semester.

We pray this small window into our adversity will alert others to educate themselves and remain aware of the potential life-threatening illness. May the Lord bless you and guide you in His perfect wisdom and care.