

Sanofi, Meningitis Research Foundation, and the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations ignite a global awareness initiative against meningitis with launch of The Meningitis Flag

Paris, August 28, 2023. Today, **Meningitis Research Foundation**, the **Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (CoMO)** and **Sanofi** join forces to launch 'The Meningitis Flag', a global initiative to raise awareness in the fight against meningitis. With the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games opening in exactly one year, and with the support of para-athletes Ellie Challis (Great Britain), Théo Curin (France), and Davide Morana (Italy), this unique global campaign seeks to increase understanding of a disease that remains one of the world's largest infectious disease killers, and yet is largely preventable.^{1,2}



From left to right: para-athletes Théo Curin (France), Ellie Challis (Great Britain), Davide Morana (Italy). All live and compete internationally with the consequences of meningitis.

Despite major progress over the last 20 years, meningitis still affects more than 2.5 million people globally each year¹ yet is largely preventable through vaccination. Bacterial meningitis is a serious and unpredictable infection that progresses extremely rapidly. It can take a life in less than 24 hours and kill one in ten.^{1,3} 20% of patients who survive meningitis suffer serious and lasting after-effects, including brain damage or amputations.¹ Around half of all meningitis-related deaths are children under 5, but it can affect anyone at any age.⁴

The global COVID-19 pandemic resulted in decreased immunity levels worldwide, coupled with a decline in vaccination rates. While it is encouraging to see substantial global recovery in vaccination coverage following pandemic disruptions, the global recovery remains uneven per geography and diseases.⁵ The Meningitis Flag aims to create coordinated global visibility and momentum to raise awareness of meningitis in the same way as the pink ribbon has for breast cancer awareness.

Vinny Smith

Chief Executive, Meningitis Research Foundation and CoMO

“Meningitis affects millions of people globally each year. We have been campaigning for over 30 years to combat the devastating impact of meningitis and now, with the Meningitis Flag, the meningitis community has a unique opportunity to leverage the power of sport so we can bring even greater visibility and support to the fight against this terrible, yet largely preventable, disease”.

Paul Hudson

CEO, Sanofi

“Meningitis is a hidden epidemic - quiet and insidious – but too often results in terrible consequences. It is therefore urgent and imperative to accelerate the global race to defeat meningitis. At Sanofi, we are committed to leveraging our partnership with Paris 2024 to elevate this fight worldwide, ensuring awareness that this disease can largely be beaten through vaccine innovation. We’re incredibly proud to support the launch of the Meningitis Flag and do our part to reach the World Health Organization’s goal to defeat meningitis by 2030”.

The first of its kind, the Meningitis Flag was designed to represent the individual, the family, friends and health care professionals that support them, and the community’s collective drive to defeat meningitis. Designed by Laura Spring, the Meningitis Flag was created by the community for the community. The flag has been a collaborative effort and co-created with para-athletes who have been affected by meningitis: Ellie Challis (Great Britain), Théo Curin (France), and Davide Morana (Italy), the Confederation of Meningitis Organizations (CoMO) members, the world’s leading meningitis non-profit organization - Meningitis Research Foundation - and Sanofi. Its yellow semi-circle represents the patient, symbolizing hope and emphasizing the importance of every individual. The purple triangle signifies the care and support provided by families. Pointing upwards like an arrow, it represents the speed and positivity in the race against meningitis. The sea of blue symbolizes the calm determination of the worldwide meningitis community to defeat this disease.

As a premium partner of Paris 2024, Sanofi will leverage the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games momentum to visibly elevate the fight against meningitis, including support for programs that will continue well beyond the Games. The ‘Meningitis Flag’ initiative will include out-of-home awareness messages displayed during the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games, in around 500 locations across Paris, close to the Paralympic sites. Beyond Paris 2024, the flag will be a beacon for the [Team Sanofi athletes](#), who will use it to support raising awareness of the disease, its symptoms and the fact that meningitis is largely vaccine preventable.¹ Sanofi and Paris 2024 welcome other athletes and para-athletes interested in joining this initiative and flying the flag to defeat meningitis throughout the world.

Note to the Editors

Testimonies from Ellie Challis, Théo Curin and Davide Morana on their own journey in life with meningitis can be found [here](#).

Official photo library for media available [here](#).

About Sanofi

We are an innovative global healthcare company, driven by one purpose: we chase the miracles of science to improve people’s lives. Our team, across some 100 countries, is dedicated to transforming the practice of medicine by working to turn the impossible into the possible. We provide potentially life-changing treatment options and life-saving vaccine protection to millions of people globally, while putting

sustainability and social responsibility at the center of our ambitions. Sanofi is listed on Euronext: SAN and NASDAQ: SNY

About Meningitis Research Foundation and the Confederation of Meningitis Organisations (COMO)

Meningitis Research Foundation is a leading international charity, working to defeat meningitis and septicaemia since 1989. The Confederation of Meningitis Organizations (CoMO) is our global network of patient groups, meningitis advocates and health professionals who operate in more than 50 countries worldwide. Together we fund and support vital scientific research; campaign and provide information to the public, health professionals and researchers to enable prevention, early diagnosis and treatment; and raise awareness in communities across the world. Alongside this, we offer individual support to people affected by meningitis and septicaemia, whether they are living with a disability or are coping with the death of a loved one. Find out more at meningitis.org and follow us on: [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#).

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Sources and references

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