



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
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MEMBER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE

February 26, 2007

Dear Chairmen Sen. Handley and Rep. Sayers and Members of the Public Health Committee;

I am here to support HB 5747 a bill to make the reporting of Lyme disease mandatory by medical laboratories and the Department of Public Health.

I would like to make the following points for your consideration.

1. The Department of Public Health followed the CDC guidelines to track positive Lyme disease test results from 1998 to Dec 2002. This tracking required the medical laboratories report to DPH and for someone at DPH to cross check with our physicians so there is no duplication.
2. The CDC pulled the Lyme vaccination from trials and no longer mandated that CT continue to follow the CDC guidelines track positive Lyme results as dictated by the CDC. The CT DPH returns to passive reporting of Lyme disease results by allowing physicians to report. This has led to gross undercounting whereas the State of Ct. has gone from #1 in country to #5.
3. The Department of Public Health has promised to have electronic monitoring of Lyme disease since 2003. They have failed to do so and even today do not have labs online for reporting. In addition electronic reporting still requires a cross check---in other words a live person to make sure there is no duplication.
4. Time for Lyme a non profit organization has offered to pay for the cost of making sure we have an accurate count of Lyme disease in the State of Ct.

This can be done by the DPH applying for a grant. The cost in 2002 of \$150,000 was the amount needed to do the cross checking and reporting.

5. Even with the DPH following the CDC's guidelines there will be an undercount because Lyme disease does not always show with a bull's-eye rash or positive blood test immediately. I would like the Public Health Committee to draft language to expand the reporting to address the undercount. Whereas we will have a baseline for the CDC and a second category to understand and see all those other patients who are suffering from Lyme disease.

There are at least two benefits two understanding the actual count for Lyme. Once we understand the prevalence of the disease and we can take appropriate measures for education, prevention, and research. The second reason to have an accurate count is to be in a strong position to receive additional Federal Dollars/Grants and to understand if the State of Ct. should be spending public dollars to deal with the disease.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jason W. Bartlett
State Representative District 2