

## H.B. 6200

2/4/09

Dear Public Health Committee Members,

I am writing in support of this bill first as a Lyme Disease patient, and second as a Registered Nurse.

I became acutely ill in Feb of 2008. I experienced multiple symptoms including excruciating headaches, confusion, disorientation, shortness of breath, palpitations, tachycardia, flushing, and severe neuropathic pain. After 2 ER visits I still had no answers. I suffered for over 1 1/2 months with symptoms increasing each day, waiting for my insurance to authorize each and every Specialist. Even though the requests were submitted as urgent, they took 1 – 2 weeks to process. I told my Nurse Practitioner that I felt my time running out. I didn't know how much more my body could take. It was she who finally ordered the Lyme test. When it came back positive, my primary MD ordered a single round of doxycycline and told me that IV antibiotics were unnecessary. As a nurse, I was surprised by the lack of aggressive treatment. She reluctantly referred me to an Infectious Disease specialist (again waiting 1 1/2 weeks for insurance approval).

This opened a new chapter for me in frustration. The Infectious Disease doctor offered no further treatment. As I was finishing the Doxycycline course from my primary doctor, I became much sicker than before. I was writhing back and forth, unable to escape the pain. Another ER visit was fruitless. I was discharged abruptly in tears and unbelievable pain. I knew from that moment that I was on my own.

As you can see, I tried to find treatment within my own community to no avail. The local ER's seemed to be unfamiliar with how tick-borne illness presents. Some doctors were unwilling to explore what might be wrong with me, instead saying I was anxious, or depressed. I have had to change my level of insurance coverage so that I may see doctors "Out of Network". My husband now drives me five hours round trip to see my doctor out of state each month for treatment. I have been on several regimens since April of last year and am making progress. I feel that without this *ongoing* treatment, I would have succumbed to this terribly misunderstood illness.

As a nurse, I am appalled at the lack of education for this disease which was first noticed in our own backyard. I am dismayed at the lack of human compassion that I experienced as a patient. Please pass this bill so that the exponentially increasing numbers of Lyme patients in Connecticut may have access to compassionate doctors who are not in fear of discipline simply for helping others.

Respectfully Submitted,

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