

Dear Representative Lyddy and Members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for sponsoring this bill, H.B. 6200. On behalf of my entire family, I would like to convey our experience with Lyme disease. Three out of four of our family members have been diagnosed with Lyme disease. Our local medical community was reluctant to diagnose us due to lack of rash and lack of a swollen knee. My son's pediatrician refused to treat my son with antibiotics despite positive blood work that meets CDC surveillance criteria. When our pediatrician learned that we sought Lyme disease treatment elsewhere, he dismissed my son from his local pediatric practice. A second local pediatric practice refused to take on my son as a new patient because he was being treated for Lyme disease at that time.

My husband and I have had to travel out of state for treatment due to the limited number of physicians who are willing to treat the later, neurologic stages of Lyme disease. Three out of four family members have been diagnosed and treated with long-term antibiotics for late stage Lyme disease and associated co-infections. We have all improved with the longer antibiotic treatment, though our son has experienced a re-infection and is currently on an aggressive regimen of intravenous and oral antibiotics again. It took nine months of aggressive antibiotic treatment before I could return to work on a very limited, part-time basis. And, it took more than a year-and-a-half of treatment before I could work more than 15 hours a week.

It is a sad reflection on our society that we need laws to protect physicians from practicing medicine with full autonomy. This is especially true when it comes to treating a relatively new spirochetal bacterial infection that is 100 times more complex in evading the immune system than any spirochete we have ever dealt with. Physicians in CT and other states, who treat Lyme disease aggressively and for a longer term than 2-3 weeks, are harrassed by their state medical boards more often than physicians who do not aggressively treat Lyme disease. Fortunately, there are some compassionate and intelligent physicians who are able to see through the politics of scientific research and who are brave enough to independently analyze ALL peer-reviewed research related to Lyme disease in order to keep the best interest of their patients a priority. These doctors treat Lyme disease patients until they are better and are able to contribute to their communities again.

Thank you,

Mary Beth Olah
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