

TO: Public Health Committee

FROM: Paul Cayer  
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Dear Committee Members:

My purpose in writing is to urge the Committee to act decisively on HB 6200 so that it is passed by the Legislature and becomes law.

I am a 60 year old State retiree, having retired as Personnel Director of Western Connecticut State University in 2003. For the past 15 years, I have experienced an array of arthritic, neurological, and cardiac symptoms. I am sure over the years, I have seen about 20 or 30 doctors for my symptoms, and have had several ER visits as well. I have had eight surgical procedures in the last 5 years, mostly for various arthritic conditions. I would not be surprised if my health insurance has had to pay well over \$100,000 for all the surgeries, office visits, ER visits, MRI's, spinal tap, and prescriptions for all these conditions. This is in spite of the fact that I try to stay healthy, don't smoke or drink, and try to exercise when my symptoms permit.

Over the years, I had standard Lyme tests - always negative. I am at high risk for tick bites, since I am an avid gardener.

My most bizarre symptoms were episodes of sudden, transient, bilateral arm paralysis, once with jerking like in a seizure. Also I had an acute episode of ataxia where my walking became so uncoordinated I thought I was having a stroke and went to the ER. About 8 mos. ago, the fingers on both hands began to lock in a clenched position, and I had to carefully pry my fingers open. My PCP and several neurologists were all CLUELESS. Meanwhile, I was losing the feeling in my legs, had poor balance, dizzy spells, had numb spots on my body, blurry vision, and almost passed out twice.

I then had a rash which was dismissed by a doctor at a walk-in clinic as RINGWORM. Obviously frustrated, but determined to find out what was wrong with me, I did my own research and realized it had to be late-stage disseminated neuro-Lyme, and that the rash had to be a secondary rash of chronic Lyme. I confronted my PCP, and DEMANDED to be treated with antibiotics for Lyme. At this point he actually agreed that it had to be Lyme, saying, "It was the rash that did it for me." However, he was too SCARED to prescribe antibiotics for a condition which officially does not exist, and instead recommended Yale New-Haven Lyme clinic, over an hour's drive for me!!

This is INSANITY!!! Doctors refusing to treat an infection with antibiotics is an OUTRAGE!!! Yet this is what happens when doctors are harrassed and punished for treating chronic Lyme aggressively.

I decided to treat with a Lyme specialist, and have been receiving aggressive treatment for 7 mos. now. I finally tested positive for Lyme on a more sensitive test. I recently also tested positive for the coinfections Babesia and Erlichiosis. Chronic Lyme does not go away overnight. Because mainstream medicine failed to diagnose my Lyme for over 15 years, the organism has run rampant through my body, including my brain. I know it will take a year, maybe longer to eradicate this infection. Had this condition been caught early, it could have been cured quickly with a few dollars worth of antibiotics. I do not delude myself into believing that all the damage can now be reversed.

I am aware of only three doctors in the entire State who are willing to treat chronic Lyme aggressively. None participate in insurance. This is a sad state of affairs for a State that is at ground zero of the Lyme epidemic.

I urge you to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Paul Cayer