

To: Public Health Committee

Re: House Bill #6200

An Act Concerning the Use of Long Term Antibiotics for the Treatment of Lyme Disease

I am submitting my written testimony about my struggle with Lyme disease. I am asking you to please support this bill and to sign it into legislation.

I am a 48 year old female who has Chronic Disseminated Lyme Disease. Before I became sick I worked full time for 10 years as an Emergency Medicine physician. It took me 5 years to get diagnosed. I saw 8 different doctors and had 5 negative Lyme blood tests at a local lab.

I did finally see a Lyme Literate physician and received a more accurate and sensitive blood test. I was positive for Lyme disease and also the coinfections of Babesia, Mycoplasma and Bartonella. By that time the disease had damaged all of my organ systems.

I was bedridden for a month. I have peripheral neuropathy in my arms and legs that leaves me with painful numbness and tingling and no sense of balance. I have lesions in my brain and developed severe cognitive deficits. My sight and hearing is impaired. My autonomic nervous system is impaired and I have trouble with high blood pressure, high heart rate and am unable to regulate my body temperature. This has also caused me not to be able to urinate or move my bowels properly. I also suffer from joint pain, muscle pain and extreme fatigue.

I did have to travel out of state to get diagnosis and treatment. I did have trouble with my insurance company not covering the antibiotic that I needed to treat the Babesia. They also would not cover a brain imaging scan or nerve biopsies that I required.

My treatment has involved a year of intravenous antibiotics and several years of oral antibiotics. I did make tremendous improvements with long term treatment. The benefits of long term antibiotic treatment far outweigh any side effects. I decompensate when I am off antibiotics and will probably need to take them for a long time.

I am very concerned that physicians are not able to treat Lyme patients without the fear of prosecution. Lyme Disease is a clinical diagnosis. A lot of patients are suffering by not having the disease diagnosed, treated properly or having adequate insurance coverage for treatment.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

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