



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

March 7, 2012

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House Bill #5335 -- AN ACT CONCERNING LYME DISEASE TESTING.

The Department of Public Health is opposed to House Bill No. 5335.

Raised Bill 5335 would establish a task force to study Lyme disease testing. The task force would review policies for Lyme disease testing in this state and in other states and produce, not later than January 1, 2013, a report on its findings and recommendations, including, but not limited to, recommendations for policies concerning Lyme disease testing in the state.

The task force would unnecessarily duplicate a recently completed review conducted by the Institute of Medicine at the request of the National Institutes of Health. The Institute of Medicine held a workshop on October 11-12, 2010, to examine the state of the science concerning Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases. Speakers discussed current research and knowledge gaps; criteria for diagnosing tick-borne diseases; the groups most vulnerable to acquiring tick-borne diseases; and the experiences of those with tick-borne diseases.

The workshop report was released on April 20, 2011 and is available online at <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2011/Critical-Needs-and-Gaps-in-Understanding-Prevention-Amelioration-and-Resolution-of-Lyme-and-Other-Tick-Borne-Diseases.aspx>.

The report addresses the role of Lyme disease laboratory testing in the clinical diagnosis of patients and in disease surveillance activities conducted by public health departments. The Lyme disease surveillance systems used by public health departments in Connecticut and New York State are both described and discussed in the workshop report.

Furthermore, should the Department have to move forward with a task force to study Lyme disease testing, we would require additional staffing to implement the requirements of this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's view on this bill.

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