

This letter supports HB 368 which considers.....

- A State Lyme Panel to improve Connecticut's Lyme Education Efforts
- Increased Information about State Funding for Lyme
- Increased Focus on Lyme Awareness through out the state

My name is Caye Helsley. I hold a Masters in Public Health and I have spent over 20 years designing targeted health education services for 2 large employers here in Hartford. One program was a Lyme education program in response to the explosion of Lyme related medical claims that we were documenting.

However, none of my professional experience could help me when I developed a fever and neck pain that lasted for several months. My Negative Western Blot blood test was "conclusive with no need to come back" said to the doc. Stating to my doctor that my home is surrounded by a 5 acre nature preserve was not enough information, combined with my symptoms, to warrant antibiotics.

So the bacteria disseminated into my joints and organs as I suffered from unexplained recurring fevers and then eventually tremors. I now have permanent joint, heart and thyroid damage due primarily to the fact that 7 doctors trusted that negative reading. While the lab included a disclaimer,

the disclaimer sits in your medical file and most often never makes into the hands of the patient. I finely found a doctor who used a lab outside of CT- specializing in Lyme- where I received a positive result and began lifesaving treatment to minimize my heart damage.

**In my opinion, the state is contributing to an already dangerous situation by NOT having an advisory panel in the face of a *known* epidemic. Lyme is dangerous and poses an eminent threat to the residents of CT. I used to think Lyme was like strep, make people aware, treat it and move on. Now, I know it is more like MRSA, difficult to treat and down right dangerous when not treated early.**

**As a trained health educator I must ask.....WHY don't we have PSA's with up to date Lyme information like Cape Cod & Rhode Island? WHY don't we have state efforts that match the level of the threat! WHY has the DPH left us all so vulnerable here in CT with so little regard for education aimed at slowing down the approaching Lyme Tsunami.**

In Summary, CT Lyme Patients are faced with an unreliable Western Blot, no coordinated education despite living at "ground zero" for Lyme, & professionals afraid to help you with antibiotics. Please develop state warning to match the threat, and improve early detection by both the public and physicians!

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO SEN. BARTOMELEO & DR SRINIVASAN FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO THIS GROWING PROBLEM.

A NOTE ABOUT ANY ADVISORY PANEL: An "honest and effective" panel needs a variety of people, infectious specialists, universities, lay people and most importantly veterinarians, to be just and inclusive. Variety ensures all view points are heard, not just those supported by one group. Lastly, keep in mind that treating Late Stage Lyme has been estimated close to \$100,000 ann. similar to estimates for a stage 2 breast cancer. And now our blood supply is being dangerously affected by this growing problem that we have left unchecked.

**Please find better ways to better protect the residents of Connecticut ~focus on public awareness.**

Respectfully submitted,

Caye Helsley (860-633-2382)

MPH, Late Stage Lyme Survivor & Patient Advocate

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