

January 26, 2015

Gentlepersons:

We are writing to show our support for Bill 207, which will fund community based Lyme disease prevention statewide. We understand how devastating this disease can be if left undiagnosed and / or untreated because a family friend, a teenager, has been suffering from Lyme for more than two years now. The path of this disease has been grueling and painful for Micaela and her family. She has experienced wide-ranging medical symptoms, including constant nausea, headaches, and significantly impaired vision. After more than 1 ½ years of experiencing these symptoms, she received a diagnosis of Lyme disease. She has missed two years of High School and will not be graduating from High School with her twin sister Sophia. While Lyme disease has affected everyone in the family, it has perhaps had the greatest impact on her mother, Rachel. The number of doctor appointments, not having a child participate in school, disbelief of the severity of symptoms by the medical and educational communities, having to decide the path of treatment for a child because our system lacks a true protocol for the disease, has all lead to an incredible amount of stress that she endures every day. One can't help but think that if our friends had known how severe Lyme disease can be, they would have taken effective action to try to prevent this from ever happening.

It is because of our experience that we support community based education as a critical step to reduce the incidence and thus the burden of Lyme disease in Connecticut. In the absence of a vaccine and cure, education, awareness, and prevention are the only tools we have to stem the trajectory of this disease. Particularly given the recent Centers for Disease Control's dramatic increase in cases of Lyme disease, this is clearly a statewide crisis that demands increased attention and increased funding.

We support the DPH effort in presenting the first Bill of its kind to fund community based prevention statewide. Lyme Disease was identified in Connecticut 40 years ago, and its burden on our society is only increasing. The proposed program will equip our residents with the most effective information available so that they may live without fear of contracting this devastating disease. Thank you.

Sincerely,



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