

VOTE NO

Lyme Disease Surveillance Criteria Amendment/Matthew Carter

Patients, advocates and people across the nation are concerned about the increasing incidence of Lyme and the already underreporting of this disease. Our children, families and neighborhoods have been severely affected by the lack of initiative and awareness this disease receives. The proposed amendment and its efforts to reduce surveillance would worsen the problems of underreporting of this already serious Public Health Crisis and add to the public risk.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT WILL CAUSE UNDERREPORTING OF LYME DISEASE

The proposed guidelines would no longer recognize the **EM** rash as sufficient for diagnosing Lyme in areas that are not endemic for Lyme disease. Many actual Lyme cases would go unreported and patients untreated because of the inaccuracy of current lab testing methods and the strict CDC lab criteria.

Probable case definitions needs further expansion, as the lack of reliable lab testing and the strict lab criteria will fail to confirm those meeting probable case definition through physician diagnosis

Suspected cases will undermine the value of mandatory lab reporting as states could comply by reporting many cases as **suspected** and therefore no follow up with physicians need be made. **Suspected cases** should be used and reported by CDC as indicator of the number of physicians suspecting Lyme in the population of that state

Result of underreporting due to revision

- 🦋 The spread of disease to non-endemic areas will not be tracked accurately. Those living in non-endemic areas will have greater difficulty being diagnosed increasing the risk of severe late stage chronic infection.
- 🦋 Physicians will not be aware of the true risks of LD across the nation.
- 🦋 The surveillance criteria for Lyme disease is especially significant, because despite the CDC's repeated instructions, many doctors continue to rely on them to diagnose.
- 🦋 Delayed treatment will increase risk of disability and overall cost to society due to Lyme disease now estimated at \$2 billion or more annually according to a study published in 1993 in *Contingencies*, an actuarial trade publication.
- 🦋 Underreporting will affect the perception of risk by the public, medical professionals and government, undermining prevention and funding efforts.

We ask for more research and additional discussion to truly measure the impact Lyme disease is having on our Nation's health.