

Support Federal Legislation to Fight Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases!

Dear Minnesotans and Fellow Citizens,

Recently the “Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Prevention, Education and Research Act of 2011” was formally introduced in both the U.S. House and Senate (as H.R. 2557 and S. 1381, respectively). The passage of this groundbreaking legislation is critical to establishing an Advisory Committee to address the issues at a national level. These goals are especially important here, as Minnesota ranks 8th in the nation for Lyme disease (Wisconsin ranks 7th)!

Currently, the available diagnostic testing is insensitive and misses many patients suffering from Lyme disease. As a result, too many become debilitated and unable to lead productive lives as they go undiagnosed and untreated. At the same time, physicians are often ill-informed about the nature and consequences of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. Many rely on practice guidelines that are one-sided and which base their treatment recommendations on flawed research. Given the alarming prevalence of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases here, it is absolutely critical that we support efforts to develop accurate testing, expose physicians and the public to unbiased research studies and a diversity of opinion, and step up our efforts at prevention. The establishment of an Advisory Committee is an important first step.

The bill requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee to address a variety of important issues. The Committee will be charged with advising Federal agencies on priorities related to Lyme and tick borne disease issues and will be composed of scientists, representatives from government agencies, health care providers and patient representatives. The Committee is charged with ensuring that a broad spectrum of scientific and stake-holder viewpoints are represented in public health policy decisions and that information disseminated to the public and physicians is balanced. The legislation authorizes \$250,000 per year.

We need your help to pass this legislation! Stand up and be counted; contact your federal representatives and ask them to co-sponsor H.R. 2557 and S. 1381 today! For further information we invite you to visit www.mlsg.com. **Thank you in advance for your support.**

Also, please send Senator Al Franken a note of thanks and gratitude as he is already a co-sponsor of this important legislation!

With Sincere Gratitude,

The Minnesota Lyme Association