



International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society

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Connecticut Residents at Significant Risk of Developing Chronic Lyme Disease *Legislators, Physicians and Patient Advocates Voice Concern Regarding Access To Care*

Hartford, CT Dec. 18, 2007—Legislators and notable leaders in the Lyme disease community hosted a meeting today at the Connecticut Legislative Office Building to discuss issues related to access to care for Connecticut residents suffering from chronic Lyme disease. With an estimated 34,000 cases of Lyme reported in 2004, Lyme disease has become an epidemic in the state of Connecticut, yet only a small number of physicians offer treatment options that address the complexities of the disease.

Jason Bartlett, Connecticut State Representative, was joined by Dr. Daniel Cameron , president of the International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society (ILADS) and Pat Smith, President of the Lyme Disease Association for Connecticut Lyme patients.

“Lyme is a serious disease of epidemic proportion,” said Dr. Dan Cameron, president of ILADS. “It is important that Connecticut residents have access to doctors who have deep experience treating Lyme disease. If misdiagnosed in its early stages, people run the risk of suffering from the highly debilitating chronic form of the disease.”

Complex Disease

Lyme is a complex disease that can easily be misdiagnosed. Reliable diagnostic tests are not yet available and not all individuals demonstrate the classic symptoms associated with Lyme. ILADS research indicates that only 50% of patients typically recall a tick bite; the rash is reported in only 35% to 60% of patients; and joint swelling typically occurs in only 20% to 30% of patients.

Additionally, Lyme can mimic other debilitating conditions. Patients with chronic Lyme disease often are misdiagnosed due to symptoms such as extreme fatigue equivalent to those with multiple sclerosis, physical dysfunction comparable to patients with congestive heart failure and neurological impairment similar to ALS.

Lyme disease is characterized by the CDC as a clinical diagnosis, reinforcing the importance of physician understanding and experience treating the disease. Unfortunately, mainstream treatment recommendations promoted by the CDC are based on the view the Lyme disease is simple to diagnose and treat, thus leaving many patients suffering unnecessarily.

Treatment recommendations promoted by ILADS and other Lyme specialists, take into account the importance of clinical observation and supports the right for physicians to prescribe treatment which aims to improve the quality of life of the patient.

“It’s important Connecticut residents have access to the best medical treatment available for chronic Lyme disease,” stated Jason Bartlett, Connecticut state representative. “I am committed to working with other members of the state legislature to support Lyme literate doctors.”

About ILADS

ILADS is a nonprofit, international, multidisciplinary medical society, dedicated to the diagnosis and appropriate treatment of Lyme and its associated diseases. ILADS promotes understanding of tick-borne diseases through research and education and strongly supports physicians and other health care professionals dedicated to advancing the standard of care for Lyme and its associated diseases.

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