

FY 2018 Congressional Directives for Tick-Borne Diseases

Submitted by Patient Centered Care Advocacy Group

House Report 115-244 to Accompany H.R.3358 for FY 2018

www.congress.gov/congressional-report/115th-congress/house-report/244/1

HHS

Vector-Borne Disease Research.—A number of agencies across the Federal government are engaged in various facets of vector-borne disease research and control. In an effort to foster greater coordination, collaboration and transparency across agency lines, the Committee encourages the Secretary to establish a coordinating office to facilitate and expedite the government's response to vector-borne disease threats, including combating the spread of disease through innovative vector control technologies.

CDC

Vector-Borne Diseases.—Vector-borne diseases, such as Lyme disease, West Nile Virus, and Zika, have high human consequences and are a growing threat to public health. The impacts of these diseases and the effectiveness of programs for surveillance, prevention, and control should be better gauged and understood. Therefore, the Committee directs CDC to include goals and performance indicators for each high-priority vector-borne disease in its annual Congressional Justification.

Additionally, within 90 days of enactment, the Committee directs CDC to submit a report to the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate, that: (1) Compares funding for high priority vector-borne diseases to the burden of disease as defined by Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs), and (2) Includes estimates for the burden of each high-priority vector-borne disease on the U.S. economy, including direct medical costs, indirect medical costs, nonmedical costs, and productivity losses.

Senate Report 115-150 to Accompany S. 1771 for FY 2018

www.congress.gov/congressional-report/115th-congress/senate-report/150/1

CDC

Lyme Disease and Related Tick-Borne Illnesses.—The Committee encourages CDC to support surveillance and prevention of Lyme disease and other high-consequence tick-borne diseases in endemic areas as well as areas not yet considered endemic. CDC should work closely with States to advance the use of Integrated Pest Management for prevention and control of tick-borne diseases. The Committee encourages CDC to coordinate with NIH, NIMH, and NINDS on publishing reports that assess diagnostic advancements, methods for prevention, the state of treatment, and links between tick-borne disease and psychiatric illnesses.

Further, the Committee is concerned by reports that cases of Lyme disease are under-reported and encourages CDC to re-evaluate surveillance criteria used to track cases of the disease while assisting States to more accurately evaluate prevalence. The Committee requests a report within 180 days of enactment of this act on how CDC is examining the potential misuse of the Lyme disease case definition. The report should also include updates on the implementation of the Lyme disease program, including advancing more sensitive diagnostic tests and details of how Lyme disease funds were spent in fiscal year 2017.

NIAID

Lyme Disease.—With more than 300,000 Americans suffering from Lyme disease, especially in rural States across the United States, an improved understanding and treatment of the disease is essential for the health and well-being of Americans. The Committee encourages NIH to issue requests for grant applications for research to investigate causes of all forms and manifestations of Lyme disease, including post-treatment symptoms, as well as research to develop diagnostics, preventions, and treatments for those conditions and for complications caused by co-infection by other tick-transmitted bacteria, viruses, and parasites.

The Committee notes that in patients who suffer from long-term complications associated with Lyme disease, clear treatment pathways are often missed as a result of inaccurate and incomplete testing. The Committee urges the NIAID, in coordination with CDC, to study the long-term effects on patients suffering from post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome, or “chronic Lyme disease.” Specifically, the Committee urges NIAID to evaluate the effectiveness of laboratory tests associated with the detection of *Borrelia burgdorferi* to diagnose the disease early, which can improve the treatment of patients suffering from chronic Lyme disease. The Committee also encourages the National Library of Medicine, in coordination with NIAID, to update its terminology in line with new research to more accurately reflect the long-term effects of chronic Lyme disease.

The Committee requests that NIH report on its Lyme disease program. The report should include: (1) A summary of ongoing or upcoming efforts to advance more sensitive and accurate diagnostic tests capable of distinguishing between active and past infection, including an analysis of obstacles hindering adoption of direct detection tests for Lyme disease that are currently available or in the pipeline; (2) An assessment of the science on persistent infection following antibiotic treatment, with a review of recent research on biofilms and persistent forms of Lyme bacteria that can tolerate standard antibiotic treatment; (3) A summary of NIH research on prevention of Lyme disease and related tick-borne diseases, information on the effectiveness of currently available methods for prevention, and a description of methods for prevention NIH plans to further investigate; and (4) Details on progress achieving NIH Strategic Plan objectives relevant to Lyme disease as well as plans to address any shortfalls in meeting goals.

NIMH

Tick-Borne Diseases.—Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases are known to cause a wide range of psychiatric manifestations. Published research has shown a higher prevalence of antibodies to *Borrelia burgdorferi* in psychiatric patients than in healthy subjects. Other tick-borne diseases, such as *Bartonella* have also been reported to cause neurological and neurocognitive dysfunction, as well as causing agitation, panic disorder, and treatment resistant depression. It is therefore plausible that a certain number of cases of severe psychiatric presentations are due to underlying infections, especially since Lyme disease is the number one spreading vector-borne disease in the world. To further investigate this hypothesis, the Committee urges NIMH to review the published literature on links between tick-borne diseases and psychiatric illnesses, and provide an update in the fiscal year 2019 CJ.