
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2288 Session of
2018

INTRODUCED BY R. BROWN, BARRAR, CALTAGIRONE, SCHLEGEL CULVER,
ENGLISH, GILLEN, HILL-EVANS, METZGAR, MILLARD, B. MILLER,
MURT, PASHINSKI, PICKETT, READSHAW, SAYLOR AND WATSON,
APRIL 23, 2018

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, APRIL 23, 2018

AN ACT

1 Providing for school entity procedures for tick removal, for
2 notification and for duties of the Department of Health and
3 the Department of Education.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Lyme Disease
8 Prevention in Schools Act.

9 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) In the last six years, this Commonwealth ranked
12 highest in the country in the number of confirmed cases of
13 Lyme disease.

14 (2) In 2016, Pennsylvania reported 12,200 cases of Lyme
15 disease, which translates to 122,000 new cases, and about 40%
16 of the nation's cases in Pennsylvania alone.

17 (3) The Department of Environmental Protection published

1 a study in 2015 that confirmed a high risk of Lyme disease in
2 every county of this Commonwealth and found all 67 counties
3 had the blacklegged tick.

4 (4) The early clinical diagnosis and appropriate
5 treatment of these tick-borne disorders and diseases can
6 greatly reduce the risks of continued, diverse and chronic
7 symptoms that can affect every system and organ of the human
8 body and often every aspect of an individual's life.

9 (5) Residents of this Commonwealth should be aware of
10 early disseminated and persistent Lyme disease symptoms and
11 should know that a negative test for Lyme disease cannot rule
12 out Lyme disease.

13 (6) The high burden of tick-borne diseases in this
14 Commonwealth requires an urgent and ongoing response.
15 Increasing education and prevention in the school setting is
16 a specific recommended strategy.

17 (7) With children representing the highest risk group,
18 schools are an accessible channel to quickly reduce exposures
19 and catch disease early.

20 Section 3. Definitions.

21 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
22 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
23 context clearly indicates otherwise:

24 "Department." The Department of Health of the Commonwealth.

25 "School entity." Any public school, including a charter
26 school or cyber charter school, private school, nonpublic
27 school, intermediate unit or area vocational-technical school
28 operating within this Commonwealth.

29 "School nurse." As defined in section 1401(8) of the act of
30 March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School Code

1 of 1949.

2 "School physician." As defined in section 1401(4) of the
3 Public School Code of 1949.

4 Section 4. Duties of school entities.

5 (a) General rule.--In the event a school nurse or school
6 physician discovers a tick on a student during the school day,
7 the school nurse or school physician shall:

8 (1) Remove the tick from the student.

9 (2) Store the tick appropriately for a period of seven
10 days.

11 (3) Label the tick with the date of removal and the name
12 of the student.

13 (4) Notify the parent or guardian of the student, by
14 telephone or e-mail and by letter addressed to the parent or
15 guardian that is delivered by the student, on the same day
16 the tick is discovered. The notice shall include the
17 following:

18 (i) The student's name.

19 (ii) The date of tick removal.

20 (iii) A statement that:

21 (A) The school is holding the tick for seven
22 days and the parent or guardian may pick up the tick
23 for testing for Lyme disease or other tick-borne
24 disease.

25 (B) A list of options for tick testing in this
26 Commonwealth is available through the department's
27 publicly accessible Internet website.

28 (b) Tick removal.--When removing a tick, a school nurse or
29 school physician shall do so in accordance with guidelines
30 issued by the department.

1 (c) Unavailability of school nurse and school physician.--If
2 a tick is discovered by an employee of a school entity and a
3 school nurse or school physician is not available, the school
4 entity shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the
5 student.

6 Section 5. Duties of department.

7 (a) Guidelines.--The department shall publish guidelines
8 consistent with section 4 on the department's publicly
9 accessible Internet website and, in consultation with the
10 Department of Education, provide the guidelines to school
11 entities.

12 (b) Tick testing options.--The department shall provide on
13 its publicly accessible Internet website a list of facilities in
14 this Commonwealth where tick testing is available and contact
15 information for the facilities.

16 Section 6. Regulations.

17 The department and the Department of Education shall
18 promulgate regulations as necessary to carry out the provisions
19 of this act.

20 Section 7. Effective date.

21 This act shall take effect in 60 days.