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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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SENATE BILL

No. 281 Session of  
2021

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INTRODUCED BY BROOKS, STREET, J. WARD, GORDNER, PITTMAN, COSTA,  
MASTRIANO AND KANE, FEBRUARY 24, 2021

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REFERRED TO CONSUMER PROTECTION AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE,  
FEBRUARY 24, 2021

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AN ACT

1 Providing for continuing education in Lyme disease and related  
2 tick-borne diseases for health care professionals.

3 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

4 (1) This Commonwealth has ranked the highest in the  
5 country in the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease in  
6 prior years and in 2017 reported 11,900 new cases of Lyme  
7 disease.

8 (2) Between 2000 and 2016, cases jumped in this  
9 Commonwealth from 2,271 to 11,443, according to the  
10 Department of Health, accounting for approximately 40% of the  
11 nation's cases.

12 (3) Because cases may be under-reported by a factor of  
13 10, cases may actually exceed 110,000, as estimated by the  
14 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

15 (4) The Department of Environmental Protection published  
16 a study in 2015 that confirmed a high risk of Lyme disease in  
17 every county of this Commonwealth and found all 67 counties

1 had the blacklegged tick.

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

7 (6) Residents of this Commonwealth should be aware of  
8 early disseminated and persistent symptoms and should know  
9 that a negative Lyme test cannot rule out Lyme disease.

10 (7) Scientific understanding of these complex tick-borne  
11 illnesses is expected to evolve rapidly in the next decade,  
12 including diagnosis and treatment options.

13 (8) The high burden of tick-borne diseases in this  
14 Commonwealth requires an urgent and ongoing response. Health  
15 care practitioner education is a specific strategy  
16 recommended.

17 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
18 hereby enacts as follows:

19 Section 1. Short title.

20 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Lyme Disease  
21 and Related Tick-Borne Disease Continuing Education Act.

22 Section 2. Definitions.

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

26 "Licensee." A physician, physician assistant or nurse  
27 practitioner.

28 "Licensing board." The State Board of Medicine or the State  
29 Board of Nursing.

30 "Lyme disease." Signs or symptoms compatible with acute,

1 late-stage, persistent infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi* or  
2 complications related to the infection or with other strains of  
3 *Borrelia*, including *B. miyamotoi*, *B. mayonii*, *B. garinii* and *B.*  
4 *afzelii*, that are recognized by the Centers for Disease Control  
5 and Prevention as a cause of Lyme disease. The term includes  
6 infection that meets the surveillance criteria established by  
7 the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other acute  
8 and persistent manifestations of the infection as determined by  
9 a health care practitioner.

10 "Related tick-borne disease." The presence of signs or  
11 symptoms compatible with infection with *Bartonella*,  
12 babesiosis/piroplasmiasis, anaplasmosis, ehrlichiosis, Rocky  
13 Mountain spotted fever, rickettsiosis, Powassan or other tick-  
14 transmissible illness or complications related to the  
15 infections. The term does not include Lyme disease.

16 Section 3. Continuing education requirement.

17 (a) General rule.--A licensing board shall require that a  
18 licensee complete at least two hours of continuing education in  
19 the assessment and diagnosis of and treatment options for Lyme  
20 disease and other related tick-borne diseases as a portion of  
21 the total continuing education required for license renewal.

22 (b) Content.--A licensing board shall establish the content  
23 of continuing medical education required under this section. The  
24 content shall address, at a minimum, the most current, evidence-  
25 based research on tick data/pathogens Statewide, patient profile  
26 and symptom presentation in regards to assessment and diagnosis,  
27 current diagnostic options and current treatment options and  
28 prevention.

29 (c) Input.--In establishing the content required for  
30 continuing medical education required under this section, the

1 licensing board shall seek input from persons with knowledge  
2 about Lyme disease or related tick-borne diseases, including  
3 universities involved in the research of Lyme disease and  
4 related tick-borne diseases. To ensure quality and balanced  
5 medical education, the licensing board shall consider the  
6 philosophies of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,  
7 the guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health,  
8 the International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society and the  
9 Infectious Diseases Society of America, as well as the latest  
10 scientific evidence and research.

11 Section 4. Construction.

12 Nothing in this act shall be construed to provide treatment  
13 recommendations for Lyme disease or related tick-borne disease.

14 Section 5. Regulations.

15 Not later than 18 months after the effective date of this  
16 section, the licensing board shall promulgate regulations  
17 necessary to effectuate this act.

18 Section 6. Effective date.

19 This act shall take effect immediately.