

2021 -- S 0711

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

SENATE RESOLUTION

RESPECTFULLY REQUESTING THAT THE RHODE ISLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF ACTIVITIES THAT EXPOSE PEOPLE TO TICKS, BETTER EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE SYMPTOMS OF LYME DISEASE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY DETECTION, AND UPDATE THEIR FINDINGS, DATA, AND PHYSICIAN PROTOCOLS WITH REGARDS TO THE EARLY DETECTION AND TREATMENT OF LYME DISEASE

Introduced By: Senator Stephen R. Archambault

Date Introduced: March 26, 2021

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

1 WHEREAS, Lyme Disease can be cured if detected and diagnosed early and if treatment
2 is administered in the early stages of disease; and

3 WHEREAS, Lyme Disease shares a number of symptoms with COVID-19, including
4 fever, achiness and chills; and

5 WHEREAS, Current diagnostic laboratory tests for Lyme Disease are available but are
6 not yet 100% accurate; and

7 WHEREAS, Anyone who mistakes Lyme disease for COVID-19 could unknowingly
8 delay necessary medical treatment; and

9 WHEREAS, Delays in the treatment of Lyme disease can lead to more severe and
10 persistent symptoms that are much more difficult to treat including neurological and cognitive
11 problems, potentially fatal heart problems and painful arthritis; and

12 WHEREAS, Chapter 37.5 of title 5 provides for insurance coverage for the treatment of
13 Lyme Disease; and

14 WHEREAS, Recent reports suggest that wildlife have become more bold, wandering into
15 suburbs and cities where human and vehicle traffic are reduced because of COVID-19; and

16 WHEREAS, White-tailed deer, prevalent in Rhode Island, are an important host to
17 multiple human biting tick species; and

1 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) classifies Rhode
2 Island as a High Incidence State for Lyme Disease; and

3 WHEREAS, Awareness is a key component of preventing and treating tick-borne
4 disease; and

5 WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Department of Health provides online information for
6 patients as well as diagnostic information and treatment protocols for physicians regarding Lyme
7 Disease and other tick-borne diseases on its website, now, therefore be it

8 RESOLVED, That this Senate of the State of Rhode Island respectfully requests that:

- 9 1. The Rhode Island Department of Health (the "Department") solicit public service
10 announcements designed to increase awareness of the activities that expose people to
11 ticks, inform the public as to current best practices for protection against tick bites as well
12 as the symptoms of Lyme Disease and the importance of early detection and timely
13 treatment; and
- 14 2. That the Department regularly advise physicians to consider the possibility of tick-borne
15 disease in their patients especially noting the prevalence of ticks in Rhode Island and the
16 potential overlap in symptoms with COVID-19; and
- 17 3. That the Department regularly advise physicians of the resources available on their
18 website for diagnosis and treatment of Lyme Disease, the importance of early diagnosis
19 and treatment and the latest treatment protocol for proper implementation of RIGL
20 chapter 37.5 of title 5; and
- 21 4. That the Department update their findings, website information, data and physician
22 protocols with regard to early detection, diagnosis and treatment of Lyme Disease and
23 other tick-borne illnesses based on current data from the CDC and other reliable sources
24 when new information is discovered or new protocols developed but at least yearly; and
- 25 5. That the Department notify physicians when findings and treatment protocols have been
26 updated; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to
28 transmit a duly certified copy of this resolution to Director Nicole Alexander-Scott, MD, MPH,
29 Rhode Island Department of Health.

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