



## A RESOLUTION OF THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is the most common reportable vector-borne infection in the United States; and

WHEREAS, within western Pennsylvania, populations of the tick vector, *Ixodes scapularis*, have drastically expanded in number over the past decade, and become increasingly infected with the harmful bacteria *B. burgdorferi*; and

WHEREAS, cases of Lyme disease in western Pennsylvania have skyrocketed over the past ten years, with the highest burden of infection shifting to non-rural areas, such as Allegheny County; and

WHEREAS, cases of Lyme disease have increased sharply especially among children in western Pennsylvania in recent years, with nearly 900 cases of Lyme disease being reported last year alone at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease can cause symptoms ranging from erythema migrans rash to fever, arthritis, cranial nerve palsy, fatigue, headache, joint swelling, and difficulty walking; and

WHEREAS, many public health agencies, including the Allegheny County Health Department, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provide a wealth of educational materials for the prevention and treatment of Lyme disease; and

WHEREAS, epidemiological data and research suggest that targeted provider education for children and their parents, as well as public health awareness of Lyme disease may be an effective strategy to enhance prevention and treatment of Lyme disease; and

WHEREAS, there are numerous steps that places that care for children during and after school can take to educate children and their parents about how to avoid

becoming infected with Lyme disease. These steps include: teaching children and their parents how to avoid tick-infested areas, to use insect repellent, to perform daily tick checks on their bodies, and to bathe as soon as possible after returning from outdoor activities.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that places that care for children during and after school and potentially have children participating in outdoor activities where blacklegged ticks are present should:

1. Make plain language information about the risks of Lyme disease and ways to prevent it visible and available on the premises and on organizations' websites;
2. Communicate electronically with parents and caregivers about risks of Lyme disease and ways to prevent it; and
3. Highlight key elements of CDC guidance for Lyme disease prevention:<sup>i</sup>
  - Know where to expect ticks
  - Repel ticks on skin and clothing
  - Perform daily tick checks
  - Remove attached ticks quickly and correctly
  - Be alert for fever and rash
  - Create tick safe-zones in your yard

**Approved by a unanimous vote of the Allegheny County Board of Health:  
*Wednesday, September 12, 2018***

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/features/lymedisease/index.html>