President’s FY21 Budget Request Includes Increase for Vector-Borne Diseases

The White House released the Fiscal Year 2021 budget proposal which includes a $14 million increase compared to the 2020 enacted level that focuses on tick-borne diseases.

Excerpts from Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2021:

- “Prioritizes Critical Health Research and Supports Innovation” ... “NIH would continue to address the opioid epidemic and emerging stimulants, make progress on developing a universal flu vaccine, prioritize vector-borne disease research, and support industries of the future.”

- “Advances Vector-Borne Disease Prevention and Control. The threat of mosquito and tickborne diseases continues to rise in the United States. Cases of tick-borne diseases, such as Lyme disease and Rocky Mountain spotted fever, affected nearly 60,000 Americans in 2017. The Budget includes $66 million for CDC’s vector-borne disease activities, a $14 million increase compared to the 2020 enacted level which focuses on tick-borne
diseases. The Budget also invests in NIH research to improve the Nation’s understanding of vector-borne diseases.”

The White House also released a fact sheet titled Protecting our Nation’s Health and Wellness reinforcing the prioritization of critical health research and advances in vector-borne disease prevention and control. Congress will review and vote on the budget proposal within the coming weeks.

Click here to view Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2021

Click here to view supplementary document Protecting our Nation’s Health and Wellness

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**TBDWG Subcommittee Reports Now Accessible**

The HSS-Tick-Borne Disease Working Group subcommittee reports are now accessible on the HHS-TBDWG webpage. The TBDWG established eight subcommittees in June 2019. Each subcommittee identified priorities and developed a report to the TBDWG that described current efforts, gaps in research, and potentials actions relevant to their topic.

Read Subcommittee Reports

The TBDWG will discuss the subcommittee reports during the next public meeting taking place January 28-29 at Hyatt Place Washington DC/US Capitol, 33 New York Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002.
In-person attendance at the meeting is limited to space available; therefore, preregistration for public members is advisable and can be accomplished by registering here. Members of the public may also attend the meeting via live webcast.

10th Meeting of TBDWG – Sept 12, 2019 Summary

Subcommittee members were announced, and the Working Group received reports from the eight subcommittees that were formed during the June 4, 2019 meeting.

Two subcommittee name changes were approved, since the Subcommittees felt names did not reflect the focus of the Subcommittees. Dr. Ben Beard, CDC, presented the change to the first committee, and Pat Smith, President LDA presented the change to the second. The two Subcommittees are now 1.) Babesiosis & Tick-Borne Pathogens and 2.) Training, Education, Access to Care & Reimbursement. Dr. Beard indicated his committee needed to include more of the tick-borne diseases and not just viral TBD. Ms. Smith was concerned because Working Group discussion had included Access to Care & Reimbursement
and that without that aspect in the title, patients' needs were being removed from the focus of the Subcommittee.

- Public comments were presented by eight patients and advocates over a 30 minute time period. Issues shared included alpha-gal, 2019 TBDWG membership as it relates to patient/advocate representation, and transparency of the TBDWG process.
- Three topic development briefs were shared with the Working Group. A common theme throughout the briefs was that the most existing research that had been collected in this process is either inconclusive or indicates that further research is needed in each of the three topic areas presented. The three topic development briefs were: 1.) Cause of increase for tick-borne diseases, 2.) Cause of persistent Lyme disease, and 3.) State of current testing for tick-borne diseases.
- The Working Group created a new subcommittee, Federal Inventory, to analyze the new Federal inventory content for use in the 2020 report to congress. LDA President and TBDWG member, Pat Smith, volunteered to Chair this committee and Sam Donta volunteered to be Co-Chair.
- Pat Smith also requested the list of NIH grants be released to the public.
- Timeline for subcommittee work and dates for the next two (in-person) TBDWG meetings were announced.

The next (in-person) public meetings will be held January 28 & 29, 2020 in Washington, DC and March 3 & 4, 2020 in Philadelphia, PA

For details visit [HHS-TBDWG webpage](#)

Comments to the TBDWG may be emailed directly to tickbornedisease@hhs.gov
HHS Announces Sep 12 Tick-Borne Disease Working Group Meeting

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) gave notice that the Tick-Borne Disease Working Group (TBDWG) will hold a public meeting via webcast on September 12, 2019, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET (times are tentative and subject to change).

At the upcoming meeting, the TBDWG will receive updates from eight subcommittees that were formed and tasked with drafting a 2019 report for the HHS Secretary and Congress regarding activities and research related to tick-borne diseases, such as surveillance, prevention, diagnosis, diagnostics, and treatment (source, hhs.gov). The subcommittees will take into consideration the 2018 report and are expected to identify gaps in tick-borne disease research as well as offer suggestions (source, federalregister.gov).

The confirmed times and agenda items for the online meeting will be posted on the TBDWG page of the HHS website. Members of the public who wish to view this meeting online are encouraged to register. Click here to register for the September 12th TBDWG Meeting.

Article References: FederalRegister.Gov and HHS.Gov

View the announcement for the 10th meeting of the TBDWG on FederalRegister.Gov
TBD Working Group Meeting Summary/Public Comments Now Available – June 4, 2019

The federal Tick-Borne Disease Working Group (TBDWG) held their ninth meeting in D.C. on June 4, 2019 with a focus on developing the next report to be drafted for the HHS Secretary and Congress. The report will include an update on federal tick-borne disease activities and research findings.

Read Meeting Summary and Written Public Comments – June 4, 2019 TBDWG Meeting

Still pending: Archived Webcast, Slide Presentation

Pat Smith Appointed to New Panel of the TBDWG

Patricia V. Smith, has been appointed as one of the public members of the new panel for Health and Human Services Tick-Borne Disease Working Group (TBDWG). Pat is in her 22 year as President of the all-volunteer run national non-profit Lyme Disease Association (LDA) and has been a leading voice and advocate for patients for over 3 decades. She was
instrumental in writing and passing the legislation that resulted in the formation of this federally mandated TBDWG. This appointment was announced publicly during the first meeting of the new TBDWG on June, 4, 2019.

Pat Smith, HHS TBDWG meeting, June 4, 2019. Photo courtesy of LymeDisease.org.

As witnessed during the meeting, Pat will continue to be the voice of the patient and the growing numbers of chronically ill. The panel convened for introductions, to hear public comment, and to develop subcommittee topics and establish subcommittee chairs to begin the work toward the next report to Congress due November of 2020. Unlike last term, nomination for subcommittee members will not be publicly solicited, but will be selected by the prospective co-chairs for each of the 7 subcommittees determined at the meeting.

Swearing in of the HHS TBDWG members, June 4, 2019. Photo
Pat served on the inaugural panel of the TBDWG, which presented its first report to Congress in November of 2018. She is joined for a second term by other returning members:

*Charles Benjamin (Ben) Beard, Ph.D.*-Deputy Director, Division of Vector-Borne Diseases, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

*Dennis M. Dixon, Ph.D.*-Chief, Bacteriology and Mycology Branch, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health

*Captain Estella Jones, DVM*– Deputy Director, Office of Counterterrorism and Emerging Threats, Food and Drug Administration

Other new public and federal members and their alternates were also announced at the first meeting of the new TBDWG panel, which took place June 4, 2019 in Washington DC, and include:

**Public Members**

The new Working Group will be chaired by *David Hughes Walker, M.D.*, Professor of Pathology and Executive Director, University of Texas Medical Branch Center for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases. He is an expert in Rickettsial diseases, particularly RMSF; and *Leigh Ann Soltysiak*, Owner, Principal, Silverleaf Consulting, LLC.


*Scott Palmer Commins BS, M.D., Ph.D.*– Associate Professor of
Sam T. Donta, M.D.— Infections Disease Consultant, Falmouth Hospital; and Former Member, U.S. Department of Defense Tick Borne Disease Research Programmatic Review Panel (Falmouth, Massachusetts)

Eugene David Shapiro, M.D.— Professor of Pediatrics, Epidemiology, and Investigative Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine; Vice Chair for Research of the Department of Pediatrics; Co-Director of Education for the Yale Center for Clinical Investigation; and Deputy Director of Yale’s PhD Program in Investigative Medicine (New Haven, Connecticut)

Regular Government Employees (Federal Members)

Commander Rebecca Bunnell, MPAS, PA-C— Senior Advisor, Learning and Diffusion Group, Innovation Center, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Angel M. Davey, Ph.D.— Program Manager, Tick-Borne Disease Research Program, Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, U.S. Department of Defense

Leith Jason States, M.D., MPH (FMF)— Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Adalberto (Beto) Pérez de León, M.D.— Director, Knipling-Bushland U.S. Livestock Insects Research Laboratory, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Alternate Government Employees (Federal Members)

Chien-Chung Chao, Ph.D.— Research Chemist, Viral and Rickettsial Diseases Department Infectious Diseases Directorate, Naval Medical Research Center, U.S. Department of Defense
Captain Scott J. Cooper, MMSc, PA-C- Senior Technical Advisor and Lead Officer for Medicare Hospital Health and Safety Regulations, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

Shahla Jilani, M.D.-Deputy Chief Medical Officer, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

David A. Leiby, Ph.D.-Chief, Product Review Branch, Division of Emerging & Transfusion-Transmitted Diseases, Office of Blood Research & Review, Center for Biologics Evaluation & Research, Food and Drug Administration

Commander Todd Myers, Ph.D.-Scientist, Office of the Chief Scientist, Office of Counter Terrorism and Emerging Threats, Food and Drug Administration

Samuel S. Perdue, Ph.D.-Section Chief, Basic Sciences and Program Officer, Rickettsial and Related Diseases, Bacteriology and Mycology Branch, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases), National Institutes of Health

Susanna N. Visser, Dr.PH -Associate Director for Policy, Division of Vector-Borne Diseases, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HHS TBDWG website

HHS TBDWG Members Press release
The Pain Management Best Practices Inter-Agency Task Force (Task Force) was established to propose updates to best practices and issue recommendations that address gaps or inconsistencies for managing chronic and acute pain. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is overseeing this effort with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Department of Defense. The Draft Report from the Task Force on Pain Management Best Practices: Updates, Gaps, Inconsistencies, and Recommendations was issued on December 28, 2018, which calls for individualized, patient-centered pain management to improve the lives of millions of individuals who experience acute and chronic pain.

Members of the public are requested to provide comments on the draft report’s proposed recommendations by April 1, 2019. For more information about the Task Force, the report and the comment process please visit the Pain Management Best Practices Inter-Agency Task Force here.

NOTE: Please do not contact the Lyme Disease Association for information on this posting.