



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 18, 2012

Vivian H. Coates, MBA
Vice President, Information Services and Health Technology Assessment
ECRI Institute
5200 Butler Pike
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462-1298

Dear Ms. Coates:

As your organization is currently contracted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to maintain the National Guidelines Clearinghouse (NGC), we write to you as representatives of areas that have a large and growing Lyme disease problem. Our constituents have again contacted us about an issue that needs immediate attention to protect their welfare.

As you no doubt know, the Lyme disease guidelines of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) have been highly controversial and have been responsible for insurance company denials of Lyme disease treatments. We have recently been informed that these guidelines have been re-instated on the NGC Web site, notwithstanding the fact that they are more than 5 years old and, hence, are no longer current. Our constituents are concerned that these guidelines have not been subject to a complete review for currency and that the methodology of any review has not been disclosed as required by the NGC's guidelines.

Our understanding is that the recently re-submitted guidelines are based on the July 2010 *Final Report of the Lyme Disease Review Panel of the Infectious Diseases Society of America*, which specifically was "not charged with updating or rewriting the 2006 Lyme disease guidelines." This aforementioned review panel was convened pursuant to an agreement between the Connecticut Attorney General and the IDSA to end the Attorney General's antitrust investigation into the IDSA's 2006 Lyme disease guidelines. The 2010 panel recommended more than 25 revisions to the guidelines, which have not been addressed. We have been presented with considerable evidence that the NGC process, which requires that guidelines be reviewed for currency and disclosure of the methodology for the process, was not complied with before reinstating the guidelines until 2015.

We urge you to follow NGC currency compliance procedure and remove the guidelines until they have been fully reviewed and revised. The mission of the NGC is "to provide physicians and other health professionals, health care providers, health plans, integrated delivery systems, purchasers, and others an accessible mechanism for obtaining objective, detailed

information on clinical practice guidelines and to further their dissemination, implementation, and use.” Only a careful and transparent procedure will remove the cloud that has hung over these guidelines.

Thank you for your serious consideration. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress



FRANK WOLF
Member of Congress



CHRIS GIBSON
Member of Congress

cc: Dr. Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D.
Director, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality