



March 6, 2017

Dear LDA,

We are thrilled to announce that Governor John Hickenlooper has granted our request for proclamation: **May 2017, Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Awareness Month in Colorado!**

Coloradans are known for their love of the outdoors. Many residents make their living working for the vast public land management agencies or tourism industries which are operated on Federally, State, County or City owned lands in our State. Many of our small communities on the Eastern plains, Western slopes and Central Mountains are farmers and ranchers. Outdoor recreationists flock to the Rocky Mountains, canyons and plains for backpacking, hiking, mt. biking, trail running, camping, fishing and hunting experiences. Many of our residents and visitors are at greater risk for exposure to ticks through both work and their pursuit of outdoor adventure within Colorado and beyond.

Common belief is that Lyme does not occur in Colorado. However, Lyme has been documented in both competent reservoir hosts, including the Mexican Pack rat and other small mammals, as well as in competent tick vectors. The Ixodes spinipalpis tick is a competent vector of (Lyme, Anaplasmosis and Babesia), a tick found within Colorado to be harboring all of these diseases. It is also known as an occasional human biter. The risk of human infection potential has been downplayed as this tick is known to be “nidicolous”, remaining within the host nest or burrow, however studies in both Colorado and California have documented open questing behavior in wooded habitats which could increase the risk for both human and pet exposure.

The Companion Animal Parasite Council reported a record number of cases of Lyme, Anaplasmosis and Ehrlichiosis in Colorado dogs in 2016.

Support group membership for those battling Lyme and other Tick-Borne Diseases is growing annually within Colorado.

There is a shortage of physicians within Colorado and adjacent western states with the experience necessary to recognize, diagnose and adequately treat Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. Too many Coloradans are going without timely and accurate diagnosis and the care desperately needed to avoid long-term complications from these often debilitating, sometimes deadly diseases. Patients suffering from chronic illness attributable to Lyme and other tick-borne diseases are desperate for recognition and access to care.

We thank Governor Hickenlooper for recognizing and supporting the growing need to elevate awareness of Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases within Colorado!

Thank you LDA for your continued support of our efforts!

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Our webpage will be launching soon! Please visit www.coloradoticks.org!