

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

**PROCLAMATION**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

WHEREAS: Lyme disease is an infectious disease caused by spirochetal bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Scientists have identified more strains and species of *Borrelia burgdorferi* in the South than in the Northeast. Lyme borreliosis and other tick-borne diseases are seriously underreported across the nation, especially in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS: Ticks, the host of Lyme disease, are carried by mice, rabbits, squirrels, deer, birds, and other animals; and

WHEREAS: Traditional methods of removing embedded ticks can increase chances of infection. Ticks can be small and detection so difficult that many people who contract Lyme disease do not recall being bitten. Prompt treatment with adequate antibiotic therapy in early stage infection may cure Lyme disease, thereby preventing permanent damage and complications of progressive Lyme disease such as disability. In some cases, untreated or inadequately treated Lyme disease can lead to death; and

WHEREAS: Lyme disease can affect the brain, heart, joints, and other organs creating misdiagnosis with more familiar conditions including rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, viral meningitis, depression or psychiatric illness; some patients fail to develop the characteristic rash, making symptoms difficult to detect for months or years following initial infection; and

WHEREAS: Tick bites can transmit Lyme disease concurrently with other potentially fatal co-infections and diseases, such as Tularemia, Ehrlichiosis, Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis, Bartonellosis, Relapsing Tick Fever, plus rickettsial infections and emerging borrelia strains, making diagnosis complicated and time-consuming; and

WHEREAS: New science and testing guidelines have been released from the National Guidelines Clearinghouse regarding Lyme and tick-borne diseases. Citizens and medical providers are encouraged to take all tick-borne diseases seriously; and

WHEREAS: The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) has reported an increase in Lyme in 2016, which represents only a portion of all individuals exposed to or clinically diagnosed with Lyme disease in Arkansas. There are currently no Lyme specialists in State, forcing some patients to travel to neighboring states for adequate diagnosis and treatment; and

WHEREAS: Through public awareness, early detection, and physician education, the devastating effects of Lyme disease and co-infections across all Arkansas can be minimized for citizens, especially children who are most at risk;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim May 2017, as

**LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES AWARENESS MONTH IN ARKANSAS**

across the State, and I encourage our citizens to become more educated about these illnesses and how they can protect themselves from infection.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 10<sup>th</sup> day of May, in the year of our Lord 2017.



*Asa Hutchinson*

Asa Hutchinson, Governor

*Mark Martin*

Mark Martin, Secretary Of State