



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is the most commonly reported vector-borne disease in the United States caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and is transmitted by the common blacklegged tick found primarily in the Northeast and upper Midwest regions of the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that 300,000 people are diagnosed with Lyme disease in the U.S. each year with 95% of confirmed Lyme disease cases in 2015 reported from 14 states, including New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, ticks that carry Lyme disease can also carry several other pathogens, many of which are reported in New Jersey, and occasional co-infections have been reported; and

WHEREAS, the risk of contracting Lyme disease can be year-round, the nymphal ticks, which are the size of a poppy seed, are most active in the spring and summer months; in most cases, the tick must be attached for 36 to 48 hours or more before the Lyme disease bacterium can be transmitted; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is diagnosed based on symptoms, physical findings (e.g., rash), and the possibility of exposure to infected ticks; 70 to 80% of infected persons will develop a rash that may have a characteristic "bull's-eye" appearance; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, there were more than 4,800 reported Lyme disease cases in New Jersey, which was the second highest number of cases reported in the nation. Lyme disease is an under-reported illness, and therefore the actual number of people with Lyme disease in New Jersey is likely much higher; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a complex, multi-system illness, which, if caught early, can be easily treated with antibiotics, but if left untreated, can affect several areas of the body, including the joints, the nervous system and the heart.; and

WHEREAS, most cases of Lyme disease can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics, taking steps to prevent tick bites can help prevent Lyme disease, including using insect repellent, removing ticks promptly, applying pesticides, and reducing tick habitat. It is the responsibility of every community to educate the public about the symptoms, to seek prompt treatment, and how to prevent Lyme disease; and

WHEREAS, the NJ Department of Health coordinates various Lyme disease activities including surveillance, education and outreach initiatives, and works to advance workforce development and training to sustain and strengthen Lyme disease public health practices; enhance Lyme disease surveillance capacity; and perform and evaluate educational outreach to healthcare providers, public health partners, policy makers and the public;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, CHRIS CHRISTIE, Governor of the State of New Jersey, do hereby proclaim:

MAY 2017
AS

LYME DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

in New Jersey, and I encourage all community members to help spread Lyme disease awareness and prevention education.



GIVEN, under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of New Jersey, this first day of May in the year