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Smith notes progress; Continues fight for “whole of gov’t” approach

Two Smith Amendments on Lyme Pass the House

WASHINGTON, DC—In the span of just six days, the House of Representatives adopted two separate amendments authored by Rep. Chris Smith (NJ-04) to increase funding to combat Lyme and other tick-borne diseases.

One Smith amendment, approved in the 2020 defense budget (Division C of H.R. 2740), adds \$2 million to the DOD’s Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program (CDMRP) for Tick-Borne Disease Research. The program is currently funded at \$5 million.

“Lyme disease is the most prevalent vector-borne disease in the United States today, and members of the U.S. Armed Forces are not immune to its debilitating effects, as they train and complete exercises out in grassy and wooded areas,” said Smith after the amendment passed on June 18th.

“The added funding will enable the CDMRP to support more innovative research so that military personnel and their dependents, who are at risk, will be better informed and prepared with enhanced awareness, education, and research programs,” the co-chair of the House Lyme Disease Caucus said.

The other Smith amendment, adopted on June 12th, will increase funding for Lyme disease research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for FY 2020.

In March, Smith testified before the House panel that oversees the CDC, and pushed for an increase from the base \$11 million to \$15 million at the CDC for Lyme. After his testimony, the committee boosted the funding to \$13 million. With the new Smith amendment and an amendment offered by Antonio Delgado (NY-19) the CDC is set to receive \$14 million for FY 2020—a 36% increase over last year, specifically for Lyme and Tick-borne research just at CDC.

“Much of what we have said for a quarter of a century has now been scientifically validated by the federal Tick-Borne Disease Working Group, including the fact that massive numbers of people are getting seriously ill from ticks and the federal response has been woefully inadequate,” Smith said.

Smith is also the [author of the comprehensive TICK Act \(HR 3073; Ticks: Identify, Control, Knockout Act\)](#), to create a new national strategy and aggressively fight Lyme disease by providing an additional \$180 million to fund research, prevention and treatment programs across coordinating federal agencies.

“We need the [TICK Act](#), a whole of government, national strategy approach to determine the prevalence, best treatment and effective means of prevention for Lyme. In the interim, I will continue to do what every I can to increase the funding for the disparate federal agencies that are doing some—but simply not enough—to help those combatting Lyme disease,” he said.