

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 27, 2017

Eric Hargan, Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Acting Secretary Hargan:

We are writing to recommend performance indicators for Lyme disease to be included in CDC's FY 2019 Congressional Justification. These indicators will help Congress better understand the impacts of tick-borne diseases and the effectiveness of agency programs for surveillance, prevention, and control. These indicators will also help improve health outcomes for patients impacted by this rapidly growing epidemic, thereby reducing the burden on our economy by reducing health care and disability costs.

House report 115-244 to accompany H.R.3358 for FY 2018 includes the following committee directive:

Vector-Borne Diseases.—Vector-borne diseases, such as Lyme disease, West Nile Virus, and Zika, have high human consequences and are a growing threat to public health. The impacts of these diseases and the effectiveness of programs for surveillance, prevention, and control should be better gauged and understood. Therefore, the Committee directs CDC to include goals and performance indicators for each high-priority vector-borne disease in its annual Congressional Justification.

To help fulfill this committee-passed directive and improve accountability and performance of agency programs for tick-borne diseases, we request that you consider including the following performance indicators for Lyme disease in CDC's FY 2019 Congressional Justification:

- (1) Decrease the incidence of Lyme disease in the United States.
- (2) Reduce the average time between onset of symptoms and diagnosis of Lyme disease.
- (3) Increase the number of tests performed for Lyme disease that can confirm the presence of infection.

These measures will improve health outcomes and support the CDC/NCEZID strategic objective *Protect Americans from Infectious Diseases—Vector-borne*.

In addition to the foregoing performance indicators, we recommend inclusion of the following strategic objectives for tick-borne diseases in support of the HHS strategic goal *Protect the Health of Americans Where They Live, Learn, Work, and Play*:

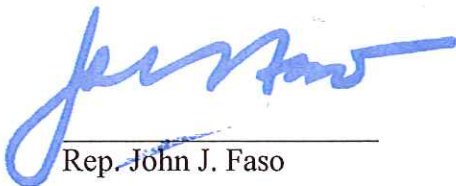
Prevent, treat, and control tick-borne diseases.

- (1) Increase collaboration between HHS agencies and state and local health departments to prevent and control tick-borne diseases.
- (2) Promote the development of innovative diagnostics and treatments for tick-borne diseases and co-infections.
- (3) Increase research aimed at controlling or reducing the population of ticks and reducing their ability to transmit disease.
- (4) Increase research on methods of prevention for stopping the transmission of tick-borne diseases to host reservoir animals and humans.
- (5) Promote personal protection methods to prevent tick-borne diseases.

We believe these strategic objectives as well as the performance indicators for Lyme disease will help improve and better protect the health of Americans, with the potential to reduce our country's health care and disability costs.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

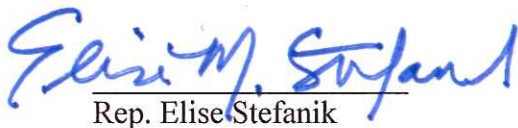
Sincerely,



Rep. John J. Faso



Rep. Scott Peters



Rep. Elise Stefanik



Rep. John Katko



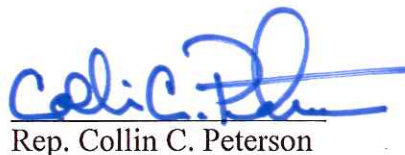
Rep. Grace Meng



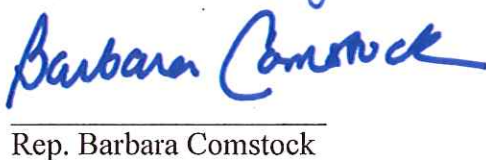
Rep. Dan Donovan



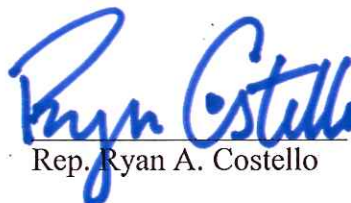
Rep. Claudia Tenney



Rep. Collin C. Peterson



Rep. Barbara Comstock



Rep. Ryan A. Costello



Rep. William R. Keating



Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney

cc: HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
HHS Assistant Secretary for Legislation
CDC Director