
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 181 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY BROOKS, SCAVELLO, GORDNER, ARGALL, BREWSTER,
J. WARD, COSTA, WHITE, DINNIMAN, BROWNE AND YUDICHAK,
FEBRUARY 8, 2019

REFERRED TO CONSUMER PROTECTION AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE,
FEBRUARY 8, 2019

AN ACT

1 Providing for continuing education in Lyme disease and related
2 tick-borne diseases for health care professionals.

3 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

4 (1) This Commonwealth has ranked the highest in the
5 country in the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease in
6 prior years and in 2017 reported 11,900 new cases of Lyme
7 disease.

8 (2) The Department of Environmental Protection published
9 a study in 2015 that confirmed a high risk of Lyme disease in
10 every county of this Commonwealth and found all 67 counties
11 had the blacklegged tick.

12 (3) The early clinical diagnosis and appropriate
13 treatment of these tick-borne disorders and diseases can
14 greatly reduce the risks of continued, diverse and chronic
15 symptoms that can affect every system and organ of the human
16 body and often every aspect of an individual's life.

17 (4) Approximately 10% to 40% of Lyme disease patients

1 may go on to suffer from a complex, chronic disease which is
2 much more difficult to treat.

3 (5) There are multiple diagnostic and treatment
4 guidelines for diagnosis and treatment of Lyme disease and
5 tick-borne illness.

6 (6) Residents of this Commonwealth should be aware of
7 early disseminated and persistent symptoms and should know
8 that a negative Lyme test cannot rule out Lyme disease.

9 (7) Scientific understanding of these complex tick-borne
10 illnesses is expected to evolve rapidly in the next decade,
11 including diagnosis and treatment options.

12 (8) The high burden of tick-borne diseases in this
13 Commonwealth requires an urgent and ongoing response. Health
14 care practitioner education is a specific strategy
15 recommended.

16 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
17 hereby enacts as follows:

18 Section 1. Short title.

19 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Lyme Disease
20 and Related Tick-Borne Disease Continuing Education Act.

21 Section 2. Definitions.

22 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
23 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
24 context clearly indicates otherwise:

25 "Licensee." A physician, physician assistant or nurse
26 practitioner.

27 "Licensing board." The State Board of Medicine or the State
28 Board of Nursing.

29 "Lyme disease." Signs or symptoms compatible with acute,
30 late-stage, persistent infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi* or

1 complications related to the infection or with other strains of
2 *Borrelia*, including, but not limited to, *B. miyamotoi*, *B.*
3 *mayonii*, *B. garinii* and *B. afzelii*, that are recognized by the
4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a cause of
5 Lyme disease. The term includes infection that meets the
6 surveillance criteria established by the CDC and other acute and
7 persistent manifestations of the infection as determined by a
8 health care practitioner.

9 "Related tick-borne disease." The presence of signs or
10 symptoms compatible with infection with *Bartonella*,
11 babesiosis/piroplasmiasis, anaplasmosis, ehrlichiosis, Rocky
12 Mountain spotted fever, rickettsiosis, Powassan or other tick-
13 transmissible illness or complications related to the
14 infections. The term does not include Lyme disease.

15 Section 3. Continuing education requirement.

16 (a) General rule.--A licensing board shall require that a
17 licensee complete at least two hours of continuing education in
18 the assessment and diagnosis of and treatment options for Lyme
19 disease and other related tick-borne diseases as a portion of
20 the total continuing education required for license renewal.

21 (b) Content.--A licensing board shall establish the content
22 of continuing medical education required under this section. The
23 content shall address, at a minimum, the most current, evidence-
24 based research on tick data/pathogens Statewide, patient profile
25 and symptom presentation in regards to assessment and diagnosis,
26 current diagnostic options and current treatment options and
27 prevention.

28 (c) Input.--In establishing the content required for
29 continuing medical education required under this section, the
30 licensing board shall seek input from persons with knowledge

1 about Lyme disease or related tick-borne diseases, including,
2 but not limited to, universities involved in the research of
3 Lyme disease and related tick-borne diseases. To ensure quality
4 and balanced medical education, the licensing board shall take
5 into consideration the philosophies of the CDC, the guidelines
6 established by the National Institutes of Health, International
7 Lyme and Associated Diseases Society and the Infectious Diseases
8 Society of America as well as the latest scientific evidence and
9 research.

10 Section 4. Construction.

11 Nothing in this act shall be construed to provide treatment
12 recommendations for Lyme disease or related tick-borne disease.

13 Section 5. Regulations.

14 The licensing board shall promulgate regulations necessary to
15 effectuate this act no later than 18 months from the effective
16 date of this section.

17 Section 6. Expiration.

18 This act shall expire December 31, 2023.

19 Section 7. Effective date.

20 This act shall take effect immediately.