

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 233 Session of
2023

INTRODUCED BY BROOKS, BREWSTER, KANE, COSTA, LANGERHOLC, STREET,
J. WARD, COMMITTA, MASTRIANO AND ROBINSON, JANUARY 31, 2023

REFERRED TO CONSUMER PROTECTION AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE,
JANUARY 31, 2023

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) Between 2000 and 2016, cases jumped in this
9 Commonwealth from 2,271 to 11,443, according to the
10 Department of Health, accounting for approximately 40% of the
11 nation's cases.

12 (3) Because cases may be under-reported by a factor of
13 10, cases may actually exceed 110,000, as estimated by the
14 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

15 (4) The Department of Environmental Protection published
16 a study in 2015 that confirmed a high risk of Lyme disease in
17 every county of this Commonwealth and found all 67 counties

1 had the blacklegged tick.

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

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

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

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

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

19 Section 1. Short title.

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

22 Section 2. Definitions.

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

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

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

30 "Lyme disease." Signs or symptoms compatible with acute,

late-stage, persistent infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi* or complications related to the infection or with other strains of *Borrelia*, including *B. miyamotoi*, *B. mayonii*, *B. garinii* and *B. afzelii*, that are recognized by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a cause of Lyme disease. The term includes infection that meets the surveillance criteria established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other acute and persistent manifestations of the infection as determined by a health care practitioner.

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

Section 3. Continuing education requirement.

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

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

(c) Input.--In establishing the content required for continuing medical education required under this section, the

1 licensing board shall seek input from persons with knowledge
2 about Lyme disease or related tick-borne diseases, including
3 universities involved in the research of Lyme disease and
4 related tick-borne diseases. To ensure quality and balanced
5 medical education, the licensing board shall consider the
6 philosophies of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
7 the guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health,
8 the International Lyme and Associated Diseases Society and the
9 Infectious Diseases Society of America, as well as the latest
10 scientific evidence and research.

11 Section 4. Construction.

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

14 Section 5. Regulations.

15 Not later than 18 months after the effective date of this
16 section, the licensing board shall promulgate regulations
17 necessary to effectuate this act.

18 Section 6. Effective date.

19 This act shall take effect immediately.