



## **New Bill to Require Health Practitioners to Receive Lyme Disease Continuing Education**

*By State Rep. Rosemary M. Brown (R-Monroe/Pike)*

Pennsylvania reported 12,200 cases of Lyme disease in 2016, which represents about 40 percent of the nation's cases, and our state ranked highest in the country for the number of confirmed cases of Lyme disease in the last six years. Lyme disease poses a serious threat to the quality of life of Pennsylvanians, and I believe it is vital that our health care providers receive the most current education on the issue.

In response to the constituents who regularly talk with me about concerns related to Lyme disease, I have introduced legislation to require health care practitioners to learn more about Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses as part of their continuing education.

The goal is to ensure prevention and diagnosis methods are well known among health care providers in Pennsylvania to help with earlier diagnosis. Lyme and tick-borne illnesses are very tricky and can present differently in each patient. There is also a concern of new pathogens present in a tick causing additional illnesses.

The legislation would require health care practitioners renewing a license or certification to meet a certain number of approved continuing education classes which address Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses. Continuing education curriculum would be approved by the appropriate licensing boards, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Further, this bill would not increase the amount of continuing education; rather, it only would require that a portion of the current requirement of continuing education hours are dedicated to Lyme disease and tick-borne illness prevention, diagnosis, management and information.

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