
By: **Delegates Conway, Bozman, Cane, Elmore, Haddaway, Rudolph, Sossi, and Walkup** **Walkup, Montgomery, Benson, Boutin, Bromwell, Costa, Donoghue, Elliott, Goldwater, Hammen, Hurson, Kullen, Mandel, McDonough, Morhaim, Murray, Nathan-Pulliam, Oaks, Pendergrass, and V. Turner**

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Read second time: March 24, 2005

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Task Force to Study Lyme Disease**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force to Study Lyme Disease; providing for
4 the membership, appointment, and staffing of the Task Force; requiring the
5 Task Force to study and make recommendations to the General Assembly, on or
6 before a certain date, on certain issues relating to Lyme disease; providing for
7 the termination of this Act; and generally relating to the establishment of a Task
8 Force to Study Lyme Disease.

9 **Preamble**

10 WHEREAS, The General Assembly recognizes the negative impact of Lyme
11 disease on Marylanders; and

12 WHEREAS, Lyme disease and related illnesses are posing a growing threat to
13 the health of Marylanders; and

14 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a common ~~but frequently misunderstood~~ illness
15 that, if not diagnosed and treated early, can cause serious health problems; and

16 WHEREAS, ~~Citizens of Maryland diagnosed with chronic Lyme disease~~
17 ~~experience great difficulty in being diagnosed and treated, thereby impairing their~~
18 ~~access to medical care~~ Lyme disease can be difficult to diagnose and treat; and

1 WHEREAS, Health care agencies and health insurers are often unaware of the
2 long-term consequences of Lyme disease and the need for continued treatment
3 coverage; and

4 WHEREAS, The prevention of Lyme disease and related illnesses is best
5 accomplished by a combination of public awareness, personal protection, and
6 environmental measures; and

7 WHEREAS, The difficulty of diagnosing individuals with ~~long-term~~ Lyme
8 disease and other tick-borne illnesses ~~often may~~ impact patient outcomes; and

9 WHEREAS, Laboratory tests for Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses
10 are not definitive and consensus guidelines for diagnosis and treatment of long-term
11 Lyme disease have yet to be developed; and

12 WHEREAS, Untreated Lyme disease and associated diseases can ~~have~~
13 ~~devastating consequences on people infected, such as severe~~ lead to heart,
14 neurological, eye, and joint impairment, since the disease can affect many organs and
15 the immune system; and

16 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is the fastest growing vector-borne illnesses in the
17 country; and

18 WHEREAS, Actual cases of Lyme disease and associated diseases are estimated
19 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to be at least 10 times higher than
20 reported because of the difficulty of diagnosis ~~or because of misdiagnosis~~; and

21 WHEREAS, It is in the best interest of the State to establish a task force to
22 study the extent and types of Lyme disease and related illnesses in the State and the
23 problems associated with ~~the lack of diagnosis, misdiagnosis~~ treatment, and the lack
24 of insurance coverage ~~for testing~~; now, therefore,

25 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
26 MARYLAND, That:

27 (a) There is a Task Force to Study Lyme Disease.

28 (b) The Task Force consists of the following members:

29 (1) two physicians who are knowledgeable of, and whose practice
30 includes the treatment of, both early- and late-stage Lyme disease;

31 (2) one physician or university immunology or research scientist with
32 acknowledged expertise in spirochetes and related infectious diseases;

33 (3) the Secretary of Health and Mental Hygiene, or the Secretary's
34 designee;

35 (4) the State epidemiologist;

36 (5) the Secretary of Natural Resources, or the Secretary's designee;

- 1 (6) the Secretary of Agriculture, or the Secretary's designee;
- 2 (7) ~~four~~ two representatives from Lyme disease support groups in the
3 State; and
- 4 (8) one member of the National Capital Lyme Association; and
- 5 (9) one member of the International Lyme and Associated Diseases
6 Society.

7 (c) The Secretary of the Health and Mental Hygiene shall appoint members of
8 the Task Force and designate a chair.

9 (d) The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene shall provide staff for the
10 Task Force.

11 (e) A member of the Task Force:

12 (1) may not receive compensation; but

13 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State
14 Travel Regulations, as provided in the State budget.

15 (f) The Task Force shall:

16 (1) study the prevalence of Lyme disease and associated tick-borne
17 illnesses, including identifying where reports of Lyme disease are most prevalent in
18 the State; and

19 (2) make recommendations relating to:

20 (i) the prevention of Lyme disease and associated tick-borne
21 illnesses;

22 (ii) educational programs to raise awareness about the long-term
23 effects of the ~~misdiagnosis~~ of Lyme disease, and where educational programs should
24 be targeted; and

25 (iii) any other issues of relevance to the prevention, diagnosis, and
26 treatment of Lyme disease.

27 (g) The Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the
28 General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, on or
29 before July 1, 2006.

30 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
31 October 1, 2005. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of
32 September 30, 2006, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this
33 Act shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.

