

HOUSE BILL 798

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HB 1323/05 – HGO

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By: **Delegates Lee, Conway, Montgomery, Aumann, Barkley, Carr, Dumais, Eckardt, Elmore, Frick, Frush, Gutierrez, Guzzone, Haddaway, Healey, Heller, Kach, Love, Nathan–Pulliam, Pena–Melnik, Rice, Robinson, Smigiel, Sophocleus, Sossi, and F. Turner**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2010
Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

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
8 Task 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 illness that, if not diagnosed and treated
15 early, can cause serious health problems; and

16 WHEREAS, Lyme disease can be difficult to diagnose and treat; and

17 WHEREAS, Health care agencies and health insurers are often unaware of the
18 long–term consequences of Lyme disease and the need for continued treatment
19 coverage; and

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 WHEREAS, The prevention of Lyme disease and related illnesses is best
2 accomplished by a combination of public awareness, personal protection, and
3 environmental measures; and

4 WHEREAS, The difficulty of diagnosing individuals with Lyme disease and
5 other tick-borne illnesses may impact patient outcomes; and

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

9 WHEREAS, Untreated Lyme disease and associated diseases can lead to heart,
10 neurological, eye, and joint impairment, since the disease can affect many organs and
11 the immune system; and

12 WHEREAS, Lyme disease is the fastest growing vector-borne illness in the
13 country; and

14 WHEREAS, Actual cases of Lyme disease and associated diseases are estimated
15 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to be at least 10 times higher than
16 reported because of the difficulty of diagnosis; and

17 WHEREAS, It is in the best interest of the State to establish a task force to
18 study the extent and types of Lyme disease and related illnesses in the State and the
19 problems associated with diagnosis, treatment, and the lack of insurance coverage;
20 now, therefore,

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
22 MARYLAND, That:

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

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

25 (1) three members of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the
26 President of the Senate;

27 (2) three members of the House of Delegates, appointed by the
28 Speaker of the House;

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

31 (4) the State Epidemiologist;

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

33 (6) the Secretary of Agriculture, or the Secretary's designee; and

1 (7) the following members appointed by the Governor:

2 (i) four representatives from Lyme disease support groups in
3 the State;

4 (ii) one member of the National Capital Lyme and Tick-Borne
5 Disease Association;

6 (iii) one member of the International Lyme and Associated
7 Diseases Society;

8 (iv) five representatives of county agencies;

9 (v) two physicians who are knowledgeable of, and whose
10 practice includes the treatment of, both early- and late-stage Lyme disease; and

11 (vi) two physician or university immunology or research
12 scientists with acknowledged expertise in spirochetes and related infectious diseases.

13 (c) The President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House shall each
14 designate a member from the members appointed from the General Assembly to serve
15 as cochairs of the Task Force.

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

18 (e) A member of the Task Force:

19 (1) may not receive compensation as a member; but

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

22 (f) The Task Force shall:

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

26 (2) make recommendations relating to:

27 (i) the prevention of Lyme disease and associated tick-borne
28 illnesses;

29 (ii) educational programs to raise awareness about the
30 long-term effects of Lyme disease, and where educational programs should be
31 targeted; and

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

3 (g) The Task Force shall report its findings and recommendations to the
4 General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, on or
5 before July 1, 2011.

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
7 October 1, 2010. It shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and, at the end of
8 September 30, 2011, with no further action required by the General Assembly, this Act
9 shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.