

Establishing A Policy To Provide For Tick Removal Kits, Informational Signs About Self-Monitoring For Ticks, And Informational Pamphlets About Lyme Disease And Other Tick Borne Illnesses

Referred to: The Public Health and Social Services Committee (Chairman Lopez and Legislators Allen, Belfiglio, Heppner, and Roberts)

Deputy Chairman of the Public Health and Social Services Committee, Chris Allen, offers the following:

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is a tick-born bacterial infection that is spread through the bite of deer ticks which are prevalent throughout Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease is responsible for numerous symptoms in its sufferers including but not limited to: fatigue, joint pain, muscle pain, muscle weakness, stiff neck, arthritis and other muscular/skeletal problems, brain fog, mental confusion and other neurological problems, bell's palsy, heart infections, skin rashes and audio logical and ocular disturbances; and

WHEREAS, Lyme disease sufferers often experience numerous debilitating symptoms for months and years after conventional broad spectrum-based anti-biotic treatments have ended which require sufferers to seek additional medical advice and treatment for months and years after their initial diagnoses; and

WHEREAS, the United States Center for Disease Control, CDC, has documented that confirmed Lyme disease cases annually exceed 22,000-25,000 and that another 10,000-12,000 cases are likely while other sources outside the CDC have estimated that tens of thousands of additional cases of Lyme disease go unreported on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS, Westchester County, Dutchess County, Putnam County and Ulster County in Upstate New York have historically had the highest frequency of reported Lyme disease cases throughout the entire United States; and

WHEREAS, prevention against an initial tick bite is viewed to be an effective method of preventing Lyme disease transmission through a methodology of self-monitoring for ticks and rolling up socks over pants legs when in wooded areas or areas where ticks are known to be present; and

WHEREAS, tick removal kits are viewed to be a potential detractor of Lyme disease transmission by removing ticks before they can transmit the disease through prolonged feeding off of a human host; and

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WHEREAS, there are hundreds of miles of hiking trails throughout Ulster County, and with the expansion of the rail trail throughout Ulster County, thousands of hikers use these trails on an annual basis; and

WHEREAS, the Ulster County Charter grants the authority to the Commissioner of Health to administer specific policies that address the dangers that all diseases (including Lyme disease) pose to residents and tourists who frequent Ulster County; and

WHEREAS, the Public Health and Social Services Committee within the Ulster County Legislature works in conjunction with the Commissioner of Health and the County Executive's Office to oversee and address the dangers that all diseases (including Lyme disease) may pose on Ulster County residents and those who frequent Ulster County as tourists; and

WHEREAS, tick removal kits have been made available at the Office of the Department of Health and prevention-based awareness signs have been posted throughout various Government locations about pulling socks over pant legs and self-monitoring for the presence of ticks after hiking or being in wooded area or places where ticks are known to frequent; and

WHEREAS, it is within the duties and responsibilities of the Public Health and Social Services Committee to set policy to provide additional tick removal kits and awareness-based signs and pamphlets about the dangers of Lyme disease and other tick borne illnesses; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that it is the policy of the County of Ulster to make readily available a sufficient number, as determined by the Commissioner of Health, of tick removal kits, signs about self-monitoring for ticks and pulling socks over pant legs while in wooded areas or areas where ticks are known to frequent, and pamphlets about Lyme disease and other tick borne illnesses at the Department of Health, the County Office Building and at informational booths along the rail trail and other hiking and recreational areas within Ulster County, and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Ulster County Legislature recommends that the funding for said policy be included in the 2017 County Executive's Recommended Budget, and moves its adoption.

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ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE

AYES:

NOES:

Passed Committee: Public Health and Social Services on _____.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

TBD- 2017 APPROPRIATION DOLLARS