



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David Carlucci

## Senator Carlucci and Colleagues Release Task Force Report and Recommendations to Address Lyme and Tick-Borne Illness

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| ISSUE: [HEALTH](#)



The New York State Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases today released a report and legislation that provides a comprehensive set of recommendations for a state action plan to enhance research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment for harmful tick-borne illnesses. To date in 2014, more than 450 new cases of Lyme disease have been reported in New York alone, and the number is expected to continue rising each year as disease-laden ticks spread to more communities.

The report's recommendations focus on the need for: additional research and data about past, current and future disease trends; increased public awareness as the reach of the diseases spread to new communities; implementation of preventive measures such as "4 Poster" devices and bait vaccines for animals to reduce the infected tick population; and measures to enhance diagnosis and treatment for those who have the diseases.

In October 2013, Senate Majority Coalition Co-Leaders Dean Skelos and Jeffrey Klein created the Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases. The task force is co-chaired by Senator Kemp Hannon (R-C-I, mNassau), Chairman of the Senate Health Committee, Senator David Carlucci (D, Rockland/Westchester), Senator Kenneth LaValle (R-C-I, Port Jefferson) and Senator Elizabeth Little (R-C-I, Queensbury).

Over the past nine months, the Task Force reviewed research, consulted with experts, heard from the public and worked to develop legislation and 19 recommendations to be incorporated into a New York State Action Plan on Lyme and tick-borne diseases. This Action Plan – similar in purpose to one created by the state Department of Health in 2001 to address the West Nile Virus outbreak -- should serve as a comprehensive roadmap for the state to prevent additional illnesses by improving research, education, diagnosis and treatment.

The report recommendations include several important research initiatives aimed at prevention and providing a better understanding of tick-borne diseases, which can be fatal. Additionally, a statewide conference hosted by the Task Force later in the year will be organized to bring together numerous universities and institutes from across the state who are already working on Lyme and tick-borne disease. The conference will focus on building collaboration and data sharing between the research community and the State Health Department and increasing access to federal research grants.

Other recommendations include a public education campaign, opportunities for continuing medical education, and a county learning collaborative. The collaborative is designed to partner counties in the state who have been at the epicenter of this epidemic with counties who are just beginning to experience outbreaks as the diseases move north and west in order to encourage the sharing of best practices.

The full report is available at [nysenate.gov](http://nysenate.gov)

Senator Carlucci said, "Lyme disease has progressed into a national epidemic. Legislation and recommendations crafted by the Lyme Disease Task Force will not only lower the amount of cases of these tick-borne illnesses, it will improve the quality of health among those living with this dreadful illness."