



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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SERINO: LYME RESEARCH KEY TO COMBATING SPREAD

SUSAN SERINO October 27, 2015

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Senator Sue Serino Presents

— **LYMEACTIONCENTER.COM** —



SERINO: LYME RESEARCH KEY TO COMBATING SPREAD

Announces \$90,000 for Lyme Research and Launches Dynamic New Website

POUGHKEEPSIE, NY— Earlier today, NYS Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) was joined by Dr. Richard Ostfeld, distinguished Disease Ecologist with the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, County Executive Marc Molinaro and members of her Lyme Disease Task Force in Poughkeepsie's Quiet Cove to announce significant funding for the advancement of Lyme Disease research and to re-launch her dynamic new website, lymeactioncenter.com.

As Chair of the Senate's Taskforce on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases (TBDs), Senator Serino successfully secured an unprecedented \$600,000 to combat Lyme Disease in the State-- \$90,000 of which is being delivered directly to the Cary Institute for Lyme Disease research.

"From my own experience and from meeting with people across the state, I know that much of the frustration and the anxiety that come along with Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases comes from a lack of answers," said Senator Serino. "Unfortunately, there's simply no 'cure-all' yet for Lyme Disease, no quick fix and no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to dealing with the symptoms, but research holds the key to those answers. That's why I am especially proud to deliver \$90,000 to help the Cary Institute continue the research necessary to combat the spread of Lyme and TBDs."

In speaking to the funding's significance, **Dr. Richard Ostfeld, Lead Scientist at the Cary Institute, said:** "Funding will provide critical support to our long-term studies on the ecology of Lyme disease in the Hudson Valley. This work has been instrumental in identifying environmental conditions that increase Lyme disease risk, such as habitat fragmentation, large white-footed mouse populations, and loss of animal diversity."

Senator Serino also utilized the opportunity to announce the re-launch of her comprehensive website, lymeactioncenter.com saying, *“I’ve heard time and time again about the difficulty people are having finding reliable information. When you or a loved one is sick, the last thing you want to do is waste time buried in internet searches trying to decipher between fact and fiction. Important information—especially about prevention and awareness—needs to be easily accessible which is why today I’m re-launching our Taskforce’s website: lymeactioncenter.com.”*

The site was first launched earlier this year, as a way for individuals to tell their ‘**Lyme Stories**’ and quickly evolved into a one-stop-shop for important information about Lyme and TBDs.

While the hope is that people will still utilize it to tell their stories and help us spread the word about the dangers of Lyme, the site acts as a platform, bringing together resources, information and quick tips for individuals, parents and pet owners.

One such resource featured prominently on the site is a simple, science-based fact sheet developed by Dr. Ostfeld and the Dutchess County Department of Health that helps people get straight to the answers that are currently available. Dutchess County Executive Marc Molinaro was on hand to discuss the importance of combating Lyme and TBDS in the local area.

“Preventing Lyme and other tick-borne Diseases is a top public health priority in Dutchess County,” said **County Executive Marc Molinaro**. “We cannot become complacent about this issue as the weather gets colder. Ticks are still active, and it is important for all residents to

continue to check for ticks and work to prevent the spread of these diseases. I thank Senator Serino and Dr. Ostfeld for keeping a spotlight on the critical importance of tick-borne disease prevention."

Rob Rolison, Chair of the Dutchess County Legislature echoed that point by saying, "Dutchess County residents have been hit hard by Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses in recent years. Education and research funding can help reduce disease rates and improve public health for those, like me, who have had Lyme disease. I am grateful to Senator Serino for her work to secure funding, and I look forward to continuing our productive collaboration through the county Tick Task Force and more on this serious issue affecting Hudson Valley families."

Jill Auerbach, Chair of the Hudson Valley Lyme Disease Association and member of Senator Serino's Lyme Advisory Board drove the point home noting, "When it comes to combating Lyme Disease, research, prevention and awareness are key. Having suffered with Lyme Disease myself, I know how hard it can be to find the answers you need to get and stay healthy and funding for critical research is an important first step. I applaud Senator Serino for continuing to make this issue a priority and for taking a unique approach to helping combat the spread of the disease by using technology to raise awareness. It's clear she's hearing us and working proactively to prevent the spread of Lyme and TBDs. Tackling the source of disease, the ticks, through research such as Dr. Ostfeld's, is critically important."

Senator Serino concluded by reminding community members of the importance of remaining proactive in preventing the spread of Lyme and TBDs saying, *“As it gets colder, we typically assume that our risk of contracting Lyme and other Tick-Borne Diseases (TBDs) decreases. However, ticks are still active. As people are out and about doing their fall clean-up or enjoying the countless parks and hiking trails in the Hudson Valley, it’s important to remember to stay vigilant and check for ticks regularly to prevent the spread of Lyme and TBDs.”*