



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

LYME DISEASE EDUCATION MAY BE COMING TO A SCHOOL NEAR YOU

SUSAN SERINO July 22, 2016

| ISSUE: **LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES**

| COMMITTEE: **TASK FORCE ON LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASES**



ALBANY, NY—Information about Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases (TBDs) may soon be taught in area schools thanks to a bill authored by Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) which was signed into law by the Governor yesterday.

“As the mother of a son who still suffers the debilitating symptoms of Lyme after being bitten by a tick as child, I know first-hand just how important it is to provide our children with the information they need to keep themselves safe,” said Senator Serino. “These diseases are especially dangerous if they go

undetected for long periods of time. As a first line of defense against Lyme and TBDs, it is absolutely critical that we give our kids the tools they need to recognize a tick and teach them what to do should they find one.”

Since taking office Senator Serino, who Chairs the Senate’s Task Force on Lyme and TBDs, has conducted an outreach program through which she offers local schools and libraries free brochures on Lyme and TBDs for students to share with their families. Through the program, thousands of brochures have been requested and distributed, however the material contained within the brochures are clearly geared toward parents and guardians. Currently, there is a lack of age-appropriate materials and resources available for schools to take advantage of should they wish to educate their students on the issue directly.

Senator Serino’s bill (S. 5804A) would remedy that by requiring the Commissioners of the Departments of Health (DOH) and Education, as well as the Department of Environmental Conservation to collaborate on developing age-appropriate instructional materials to promote education and awareness for school-aged children.

The bill would not mandate that the materials be taught in New York schools, but requires that they be made available should schools wish to utilize them with the hope that schools in the areas hardest hit by Lyme and TBDs take advantage of the resources.

“This bill is about getting important information directly into the hands of our young people, who are especially susceptible to disease-carrying ticks, so that they can protect themselves when enjoying the outdoors,” Serino said.

The bill was sponsored in the Assembly by Assemblymember Didi Barrett. It is slated to take effect immediately.