



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## COMMUNITY TURNS OUT TO BUST 'LYME MYTHS'

SUSAN SERINO June 29, 2017

| ISSUE: **LYME DISEASE, PUBLIC HEALTH, HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT**

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



HYDE PARK, NY—With experts predicting an especially bad year for ticks, over 200 community members turned out last night for a unique public forum hosted by Senator Sue Serino aimed at debunking some of the most common myths surrounding Lyme and tick-borne diseases (TBDs). The free event was held at the Wallace Center at the FDR Presidential Library and Home in Hyde Park and featured a panel of Lyme and tick experts who provided attendees with accurate and up-to-date information to help keep them, their families, and

their pets tick-free this summer.

*“Raising awareness for Lyme and tick-borne diseases has been one of my highest priorities since taking office simply because awareness works,” said Senator Serino. “But it only works if the information that is out there is accurate and up-to-date, and too often we are seeing more and more false, misleading—and frankly dangerous—information making its way around the community. This event was about setting the record straight and debunking some of the most pervasive myths that have a direct impact on the health and safety of people and their pets, and I was thrilled to see so many in the community turn out.”*

Experts in the field were on hand to provide community members with invaluable information and to answer their most pressing questions. The evening’s speakers included, Holly Ahern, an esteemed Associate Professor of Microbiology at SUNY Adirondack, Dr. Matt Frye, a renowned IPM Specialist from the Cornell University’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, and Dr. Cassandra Guarino from the Cornell University’s College of Veterinary Medicine’s Serology Lab. Local organizations including the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies and the Hudson Valley Lyme Disease Association, along with Cornell University, set up informational tables ahead of the event to provide information on everything from identification tips and tricks, to effective prevention techniques.

Senator Serino also announced that as Chair of the Senate’s Task Force on Lyme and TBDs, she was successful in securing over \$400,000 in this year’s state budget, which will be utilized throughout the state to bolster research, prevention, and awareness initiatives in areas especially hard-hit by Lyme and TBDs. Specifically the funding will be utilized as follows:

- Educational Outreach through Cornell University—\$200,000
- NYS Department of Health—\$127,500
  - Public Awareness Campaign
  - Collection Sites and Testing

- Database Mining
- County Collaborative Learning Initiative to ensure county health officials have the most accurate and up-to-date information available to empower local communities
- SUNY Adirondack/Paul Smith's College Tick Pathogen Prevalence and Lyme Disease Biobank Project—\$50,000
- Southampton Hospital: Tick-Borne Disease Resource Center—\$50,000

*“A funding commitment from the state plays an invaluable role in the fight against Lyme,” **Serino said.** “We are working tirelessly to fund projects around the state that will have a tangible impact on combatting the spread of Lyme and TBDs, and while we have made significant progress, I will continue to fight to ensure that the severity of these diseases is recognized at the state level and push to make it a funding priority ahead of next year’s budget.”*