



NEWS FROM
Senator Chris Jacobs
REPRESENTING THE 60TH NEW YORK SENATE DISTRICT

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JACOBS CALLS ON GOVERNOR, ASSEMBLY TO SUPPORT LYME DISEASE FUNDING

Announces legislative initiatives to fight growing public health epidemic

(Buffalo, NY) –A former member of the New York State Senate’s Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases, Senator Chris Jacobs (60th SD) is calling on the Governor and Assembly leaders to support \$1 million in the state budget, and take action on a series of bills, to help combat Lyme and other tick-borne diseases. The Senator was joined in his advocacy by patients, family members and advocates from Lyme WNY.

“New York State has the misfortune of being at the epicenter of the Lyme and tick-borne disease epidemic with approximately 9,000 cases of Lyme and other TBD’s being reported annually to the New York State Department of Health,” said Senator Jacobs. “Clearly more resources need to be committed to bolster education, prevention and research initiatives.”

Lyme and TBD funding has always been an initiative of the former Senate Republican majority conference. The Governor and the Assembly have never included any meaningful Lyme disease funding in their respective budget proposals. The more than \$2 million in dedicated funding since 2015, including the record level \$1 million last fiscal year, occurred only because of the insistence of Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Task Force members during final budget talks. At the urging of these former Task Force members, the new majority included another \$1 million in the Senate one-house budget. As budget talks grind on in Albany, Jacobs, Lyme WNY and advocates around the state want to make sure the funding survives in the final spending plan.

“Lyme and tick-borne diseases are misunderstood, misdiagnosed, often debilitating, and have devastating effects on one’s physical and mental health every moment of every day,” said Lyme WNY founder Rebecca Roll. “Families are financially drained by the cost of long-term medical treatment in their efforts to try and live a normal life again. On behalf of our entire organization, and the Lyme warriors in our community, I want to thank Senator Jacobs for supporting the funding and legislation critical to our fight against Lyme and TBD’s.”

Ninety-five percent of Lyme disease cases reported in the United States come from only 14 states, many of which are in the Northeast. Despite the severity of the condition, a general lack of public awareness creates a number of significant challenges. They range from difficulty in diagnosing the disease in a timely fashion so it can be more effectively treated, to the

exorbitant costs of treatment and lack of insurance coverage for long-term care associated with chronic Lyme. Jacobs is co-sponsoring a number of bills to address some of these challenges.

“Funding is critical, but at the same time we must make strides in researching and analyzing policy proposals that will allow us to establish uniform and effective treatment protocols,” said Jacobs. “That can be a great next step in helping us address insurance questions that are currently leaving some individuals and families with the unfair and unreasonable choice of enduring a great financial burden or sacrificing quality of life.”

Specific bills Senator Jacobs is co-sponsoring to address these issues are:

- S.1247 – Establishes grants to support graduate medical education in Lyme and TBD’s
- S.1306 – Creates a pilot program for Lyme and tick-borne disease testing in children
- S.1307 – Establishes requirements for reporting Lyme and TBD’s after death
- S.1345 – Requires the New York State health care quality and cost containment commission to issue a report on coverage for chronic Lyme disease

“The challenges we face from the Lyme and tick-borne disease epidemic is extensive and requires a comprehensive approach to mitigate,” said Jacobs. “Securing this funding and moving these pieces of legislation forward must be a priority for the legislature this year,” the Senator concluded.

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