



Onondaga County Legislature

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Clerk

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Chairman

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Deputy Clerk

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HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE MINUTES – JULY 18, 2023 **COLLEEN A. GUNNIP, CHAIR**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Chase, Ms. Kuhn, Dr. Kelly, Mr. Bush

ALSO ATTENDING: See attached

Chair Gunnip called the meeting to order at 10:29 a.m. *The minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed, and there were no objections to waiving the reading. There were no corrections to the minutes, and the minutes were approved.*

1. **CNY LYME & TICK BORNE DISEASE ALLIANCE:** Royale Scuderi, Executive Director; Anne Messenger, Board Chair
 - a. **INFORMATIONAL**

Annual Report on file with the clerk

Ms. Messenger presented the following information:

- CNY Lyme and Tick Borne Disease Alliance
 - Going on four years old
 - Board doctors, nurses, scientists and community members
 - Does not do clinical work, doctors do; does not do research, scientists do
 - Education is what CNY Lyme Alliance does
- On the board, Dr. Saravanan Thangamani, scientist who runs the temporarily closed “free” tick test lab at Upstate
 - Awarded \$100,000 by the Legislature
 - \$100,000 will not open lab tomorrow, will build amount of money needed to open the “free” tick test lab
 - Use that experience to trigger other funding from balance of 60 other counties in the state
 - Dr. Anderson, new Health Commissioner has been instrumental in putting Dr. Thangamani in front of the other counties’ decision makers

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- Who funded the program before?
 - Various pots of money, mostly federal, never had state funding, now have county funding
 - Dr. Thangamani has a website, has a capacity to get private donations
 - Upstate landed Dr. Thangamani 4 years ago from Texas along with five staff members
 - \$6M lab to move him from Texas to help do other tick borne disease research
 - While lab being built, thought to set up tick test lab and it exploded (funded by federal money & doctor’s money)
- How much money is needed for one year?
 - \$500,000+; spending most of research time trying to get more money
- CNY Lyme and Tick Borne Alliance is here to talk about the Lyme Alliance
 - Education; while Dr. Thangamani is doing his research, Lyme doctor is treating people with Lyme
 - Do not have answers to testing, vaccines, all happening
 - Job is to go out and teach prevention to community groups, camps, schools and everyone
 - Wear white clothing

- Do not go into edge of yard
- Use bug spray
- Take a shower after being outside
- Put clothes into dryer for 10 minutes to kill ticks
- Tick numbers are high over the last four years
- Clinicians, doctors, PA's and nurses, do not know signs of tick borne diseases, if seen, either denied or misdiagnosed
- CNY Lyme will get a small piece of the \$100,000 to continue work
- Communication channels are overwhelmed with phone calls, texts, and emails hearing about what is being done

Ms. Scuderi presented the following information:

- Did 1st Lyme Summit last year, 2nd one will be this year in September – 50 people in the room
 - Provided CNA(Certified Nursing Assistant) continuing medical education
 - Learned 90% said they were going to change way to diagnose and treat patients
 - This year, hoping for 100 people in the room, give more practitioners ability to attend
 - Expanded content, increased resources, and increased CNE (Certified Nurse Educator) credits from 7.5 to 11.5
 - CNE is provided free of cost
 - Incentive for local health care providers to attend
 - Educating providers to give better patient care
 - Someone comes in with flu like symptoms, need to think about other tick borne diseases and diagnosis, other diseases complicate this
- Completed 2nd Lyme Awareness Walk
 - 100's of participants, patients, family members, positive steps taken
 - Campaign in May, 4th year, community wide effort to light up buildings in green
 - e.g. National Grid, Upstate
 - Month long blitz campaign–interviews, PSA's, and advertise on billboards
 - May is terrible for ticks
 - Reaching thousands a year; website visitors, social media, radio; over 3-4 year tenure
 - 40,000 individuals reached–raises level of awareness
- Ticks have doubled in last couple of years
- 50% have at least one pathogen; exposure risk doubles
- Lack of bandwidth; now have 2 educators, part-time to volunteering to a staff of 4 narrowed to Madison, Onondaga, and Oswego County
 - 3 counties–a perfect storm, demographic variety; urban, rural, suburban population
 - Wide variety discovered, changed strategies, materials, have to meet people where they are
 - Significant population that does not speak English
 - Infographic in English and Spanish to reach refugee & immigrant population
- Shocking as to why there is not more funding for this project
- Largely grant funded by foundation; have to manage, organize
- Find alternate methods of funding; need educators

Questions/Comments from the committee:

- How has funding for deer culling affected the Lyme disease problem?
 - Talked to Environmental Experts, deer culling is not helpful relative to ticks
 - Helpful for car accidents, eating plants in garden, etc.
 - Have to reduce deer population significantly~95% in order to be effective
 - Deer are large mammals that move ticks from one area to another
 - Small mammals are moving ticks into yards
 - From a public education standpoint it can give people a false sense of safety
- Difficult getting answers from people supporting it, how has this effected Lyme disease?
 - Statistically the tick population continues to explode
- Across the U.S., is this an east coast problem or just New York?
 - CDC collects data, each state reports differently, some stopped reporting data, cannot rely on data

- Lyme diseases are spreading into southeast, southwest and elsewhere
- Largest in northeast, as the tick disease spreads it brings more pathogens
 - 17 Diseases (not all here in NY), 6 are in NY
- CDC estimates 4,000-5,000 cases a year, there is more missed and or recorded; shows up as MS or Fibromyalgia
- Are there relationships with other organizations in the surrounding location to prevent the spread of these things?
 - No one is doing what Lyme Alliance is doing outside this county (NY State), there are advocacy groups
 - There is Cornell Co-Op
 - If questions, go to doctors, have clinical information that underlines this presentation
 - Cornell is great but Lyme Alliance takes it a step beyond
- Is it appropriate to approach people running for office and give them information about what is going on, the lack of funding, and lives being destroyed?
 - Conversations happen all year long with local Legislators
 - Very supportive and knowledgeable about this issue, drop in the bucket to entire state
- People do not have the education to be aware of the issue from the start
- Any idea of degree of capturing a tick carrying a pathogen the level to which it translates into active disease
- Does everyone that gets bitten by a pathogen carrying tick, get the disease?
 - If ability to transmit is 1:1, tick has five pathogens, they can transmit all five pathogens
 - What determines it is the length of attachment
 - Lyme Disease varies, used to be 3 days, now 24 hours; environmentalists/scientists saying 12 hours
 - If tick is attached for 24 hours, good chance it can be transmitted
- Tick test kits were given to adult groups, camps and schools
 - Educate kids; give them resources and knowledge so it can be taken home
- For the budget next year, Lyme Alliance is asking for \$75,000 from the county
- What does Oswego County and Madison County do in way of financing support?
 - Shineman Foundation of Oswego County (supporter of three years)
 - Madison County is the Gorman Foundation
 - Onondaga County is the lead
- Has the Alliance approached the Health Department?
 - Oswego County Health Commissioner, John King, did whatever to support the Alliance; left Oswego

A motion was made by Ms. Gunnip, seconded by Dr. Kelly, to adjourn the meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Respectfully submitted,



DEBBIE KAMINSKI, Assistant Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

COMMITTEE: HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
DATE: JULY 18, 2023

| NAME (Please Print) | DEPARTMENT/AGENCY |
|---------------------|--|
| Anne Messenger | CNY Lyme + Tick-Borne Disease Alliance |
| Royale Scuderi | CNY Lyme + TBD Alliance |
| Tim Fratschi | Council |
| John Desantis | Leg. |
| Jim Rowley | Leg. |
| Bill Kinne | Leg. |
| Jim Beebe | Leg. |
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