



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

Young Appointed To Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases

CATHARINE YOUNG February 27, 2015

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Focus will be on improving prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of tick-borne diseases

ALBANY - Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean) has been appointed to the Senate's Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases. The Task Force's mission is to protect the health of New Yorkers by improving methods to prevent, diagnose, and treat Lyme and other tick-borne diseases.

Task Force members will play an active role in reviewing research, consulting with experts, and soliciting public input to develop legislation and advocate for additional resources to address the spread of Lyme disease in New York.

"In recent years, the tick population and the disease they transmit have become issues of increasing concern. Lyme and other tick-borne diseases pose a serious health threat to residents and pets, and complications from the disease can have life-long consequences.

Reforming guidelines to better enable medical professionals to treat the disease and establishing parameters to help control the spread of ticks is crucial in confronting this public health crisis,” said Senator Young.

From 2010 to 2013, the Chautauqua County Department of Health reported 18 human cases of Lyme disease, the Allegany County Department of Health confirmed 20 cases of Lyme disease, and the Livingston County Department of Health reported seven cases. In Cattaraugus County, there were three human cases of Lyme disease in 2012 and four additional cases in 2013.

“While Lyme and other tick-borne diseases are most prevalent among outdoor enthusiasts, residents can be susceptible simply by walking through their lawn. Regrettably, someone bitten by a deer tick may not know they have contracted Lyme until the distinctive bull’s-eye like rash appears,” Senator Young said.

Last year, Senator Young led the effort to adopt [Senate bill 7854](#), which was signed into law to help people benefit from innovative and effective alternative medical treatments.

Other projects include the creation of a learning collaborative initiative to partner counties which have been at the epicenter of the Lyme epidemic with counties that are just beginning to experience outbreaks. A statewide conference also is being encouraged to bring together state health officials and the research community at universities and institutes across New

York. Both of these proposals will come to fruition in the coming months.

This year, Senator Young and members of the Senate Task Force will continue to build upon funding secured by the Senate in last year's state budget to promote the ongoing implementation of new programs and recommendations included in the [original report](#) issued last summer. Efforts will also be made to continue a public dialogue and outreach to identify issues related to prevention, detection, and treatment of tick-borne illnesses.

"We need to be taking all necessary precautions to prevent further spread of the deer tick population and Lyme disease. The Senate's Task Force will again work with leaders in healthcare, environmental conservation, and other fields to improve the public's health and safety," concluded Senator Young.