



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

Senate approves legislation O'Mara co-sponsors to strengthen response to Lyme and tick-borne diseases: Legislation follows recommendations of Senate Task Force

THOMAS F. O'MARA June 4, 2018

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COMBATting LYME DISEASE



**Senate Task Force
on Lyme & Tick-Borne Diseases**

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Albany, N.Y., June 4—The Senate today approved legislation co-sponsored by Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats), a member of the Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne

Diseases (TBDs), to strengthen New York State's response to the rise of these diseases.

"We've taken important actions over the past few years to broaden the state's overall response to the spread of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, but much more needs to be done, particularly in the areas of reporting, testing and treatment, and education and awareness. This legislation would greatly strengthen New York's long-term strategy," said O'Mara.

The legislation approved today would:

- > require the state to conduct an impact study considering how infectious diseases and blood-borne pathogens, including Lyme and TBDs, may have correlations with mental illness in infected individuals. The new "Mental Health Impacts Report" would enable better treatment of the mental health consequences associated with these infections (**S7171**);
- > help ensure medical professionals are properly trained to treat patients with Lyme or other tick-borne diseases. The legislation would authorize the Department of Health (DOH) to award grants for graduate medical education in Lyme and tick-borne diseases, designate organizations as centers of excellence for Lyme and tick-borne diseases, and designate Lyme and tick-borne-disease resource centers (**S.2621**); and
- > establish an expert-based Lyme and TBDs Working Group to review current best practices for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of Lyme and TBDs (**S7170**).

The legislation now goes to the state Assembly for action.

O'Mara said that the measures are part of the Senate's latest, comprehensive legislative package representing recommendations first made in a Task Force report released last October, "Ticking Time Bomb: An Update on the Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Epidemic in

New York State."

The full Senate report is attached above.