

# NEWS FROM

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## Senator Chris Jacobs

REPRESENTING THE 60TH NEW YORK SENATE DISTRICT



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### **JACOBS, LYME TASK FORCE SEEK TO DEVELOP STATEWIDE DISEASE PROTOCOL**

*Legislative proposal is centerpiece of State Senate report*

(Buffalo, NY) – New York State Senator Chris Jacobs, a member of the State Senate Task Force on Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases (TBDs), is co-sponsoring legislation that would require the New York State Commissioner of Health to develop a standard protocol for the diagnosis of these debilitating diseases. The bill (S.6926) would also require providers to provide patients with a notification form to better educate them about their test results.

“A constant theme in the Lyme forum I hosted earlier this year and in public hearings across the state is the great difficulty in diagnosing the disease in a timely fashion so it can be more effectively treated,” said Senator Jacobs. “As new and more dangerous strains of these diseases continue to spread throughout our state, it is clear that these protocols for notification and treatment are desperately needed.”

Testing currently used to detect TBDs is plagued with rampant inaccuracies that lead to errors in diagnoses and too many occurrences of patients thinking they are free of disease. The subsequent delays in receiving critical treatment result in worsening – and sometimes irreversible – symptoms.

“A standard protocol for diagnosis, treatment and patient notification will do far more than just empower patients and their families,” said Jacobs. “It will also serve as an effective tool for providers that will result in better patient outcomes.”

Introduction of this legislation was one of a number of recommendations contained in a recently issued report from the Senate task force entitled “Ticking Time Bomb: An Update on the Lyme and Tick-borne Disease Epidemic in New York State.” Other key recommendations include creation of a statewide action plan, and reinstating the NYS Health Quality Cost Containment Commission to accurately assess the cost of insurance and consider coverage for long-term treatment of symptoms.

“It is clear from the increase across the state in tick-borne diseases that this growing threat requires significant attention and resources,” said Jacobs. “I look forward to working with my colleagues on the Lyme Task Force in developing and implementing recommendations from this report in the upcoming legislative session,” the Senator concluded.

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