



BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

A PROCLAMATION LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

- WHEREAS: Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses are grossly underreported across the nation. Lyme disease is a serious infection caused by spirochetal bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Scientists have identified more strains and species of *Borrelia burgdorferi* in the Southeastern United States than in any other region of the country, thus, true risk to humans in the Southeast is unknown. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has consistently cautioned medical professionals and citizens that the CDC's case definition used to report Lyme disease should not be used for clinical diagnosis, as many patients may not meet reporting criteria yet may still be infected; and
- WHEREAS: Ticks, the vector of Lyme disease, are carried by birds and animals and are frequently encountered by Georgia citizens. Ticks can be so small and hard to detect that many people who contract tick-borne diseases do not recall being bitten; and
- WHEREAS: Improper methods of removing embedded ticks are dangerous and can increase the risk of acquiring the infection. Early recognition is needed as prompt treatment with adequate antibiotic therapy in early stage infection may cure Lyme and other tick-borne diseases and prevent permanent damage and complications. Lyme disease may become more difficult to treat if therapy is delayed. Untreated or inadequately treated tick-borne diseases can sometimes lead to death; and
- WHEREAS: Lyme disease can affect the brain, heart, joints, and other body organs and mimics many other diseases. Some patients do not develop the characteristic rash and symptoms may not appear for months to even years following initial infection. Patients are often misdiagnosed with more familiar conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fatigue, Fibromyalgia, Multiple Sclerosis, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, depression, or psychiatric illness; and
- WHEREAS: The science surrounding Lyme and tick-borne diseases is unclear and emerging, and testing may be inaccurate. With over a dozen tick-borne diseases now recognized in the Southeastern United States, citizens and medical providers are encouraged to take all symptoms following tick bites seriously; now
- THEREFORE: I, NATHAN DEAL, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim May 2014 as LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH in Georgia and encourage our citizens to become better educated about this illness and how they can protect themselves from infection.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 4th day of February in the year of our Lord two thousand fourteen.



Nathan Deal

GOVERNOR

ATTEST

Chris W. Riley

CHIEF OF STAFF