

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 11, 2009

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman, Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health
2125 Rayburn
INSIDE MAIL

Dear Frank:

We write today to let you know that the Lyme and Tick-Borne Diseases Prevention, Education, and Research Act (H.R. 1179) was reintroduced in late February. Tim Holden and Bart Stupak, who serve with us as bipartisan co-chairs of the House Lyme Caucus, joined as original cosponsors on this legislation.

Last September during our exchange on the House floor you said that you were open to having hearings not only on this legislation, but on the issue of Lyme disease research and treatment in general. As you may recall, you foresaw holding such a hearing during the 111th Congress. We hope that you will make good on this commitment.

As you know, Lyme is the most prevalent vector-borne disease in the United States today. About 270,000 Americans developed Lyme disease in 2007. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the 27,444 new cases reported in 2007 represent only 10 percent of the actual cases meeting its stringent criteria.

These statistics are alarming, but the narrative that accompanies the numbers is even more devastating. Our constituents – and yours – are suffering from Bell's palsy, meningitis, neurological problems such as facial paralysis and memory problems, and a host of other manifestations from Lyme disease.

We realize that your subcommittee has sole jurisdiction over many complex issues, but are asking today that you schedule hearings on Lyme disease as soon as possible.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,



Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress