

Information Quality Request for Correction

Regarding geographic distribution of Lyme disease

January 14, 2020

Pursuant to the *HHS Guidelines for Ensuring and Maximizing the Quality, Objectivity, Utility, and Integrity of Information Disseminated to the Public*, the undersigned individuals and organizations request that inaccurate information disseminated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) about the geographic distribution of Lyme disease be corrected.

Information to be Corrected

The CDC web page for Lyme Disease Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) at <https://www.cdc.gov/lyme/faq/index.html> contains the following question and answer:

“Is it true that you can get Lyme disease anywhere in the U.S.?”

“No. Lyme disease is spread through the bite of a blacklegged tick (*Ixodes scapularis* or *Ixodes pacificus*) that is infected with *Borrelia burgdorferi*. In the United States, most infections occur in the following endemic areas: Northeast and mid-Atlantic, from northeastern Virginia to Maine, North central states, mostly in Wisconsin and Minnesota, West Coast, particularly northern California

The answer is incorrect. According to CDC surveillance reports, Lyme disease has been reported in every U.S. State except Hawaii. The map at www.cdc.gov/lyme/datasurveillance/maps-recent.html clearly shows that Lyme disease occurs throughout the U.S.

Impact

In addition to being a violation of HHS guidelines for information quality, the statement that implies Lyme disease does not occur throughout the U.S. has potential to harm patients in states with low incidence rates who are misdiagnosed and denied treatment when doctors rule out Lyme disease because of inaccurate information from CDC.

Recommended Action

To correct the inaccuracy change the word “No” to “Yes”

Complainant



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