



BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

**A PROCLAMATION
LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASE
AWARENESS MONTH**

WHEREAS: Lyme disease is an infectious disease 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. Lyme borreliosis and other tick-borne diseases are seriously under-reported across the nation; and

WHEREAS: Ticks, the vector of Lyme disease, are carried by mice, rabbits, squirrels, deer, birds, and other animals; and

WHEREAS: Improper methods of removing embedded ticks are dangerous and can increase the risk of acquiring the infection. Ticks can be so small and hard to detect that many people who contract Lyme disease do not recall being bitten. Prompt treatment with adequate antibiotic therapy in early stage infection may cure Lyme disease, thereby preventing permanent damage and complications of progressive Lyme disease. If therapy is delayed, Lyme disease may become more difficult to treat. In some cases, untreated or inadequately treated Lyme disease can lead to death. Lack of early recognition, diagnosis, and treatment can result in permanent physical damage, therefore many Lyme patients are left disabled; 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 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 2013, 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 15th day of April in the year of our Lord two thousand thirteen.



Nathan Deal

GOVERNOR

ATTEST

C. R.

CHIEF OF STAFF