BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

A PROCLAMATION

LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH

WHEREAS: Lyme disease is a serious infection caused by the spread of spirochetal bacteria, or Borrelia burgdorferi, and transmitted through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. Scientists have identified more strains and species of Borrelia burgdorferi in the Southeastern states than in any other region of the country, and therefore the risk of acquiring Lyme disease in the Southeast may be elevated; and

WHEREAS: Ticks are carried by birds and other animals, and are frequently encountered by Georgia citizens in many parts of the state. Ticks are small and difficult to detect, thus many of those who contract tick-borne diseases do not recall being bitten. As a result, Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses are underreported nationwide; and

WHEREAS: Improper removal of embedded ticks is dangerous and can increase the risk of acquiring an infection. Early diagnosis is necessary, as prompt treatment with adequate antibiotic therapy in early stage infection may cure Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, and prevent permanent damage or future complications. Lyme disease may become more challenging to treat if therapy is delayed, and untreated or inadequately treated tick-borne diseases may lead to death; and

WHEREAS: Lyme disease can affect the brain, heart, joints, and other body organs, and mimics the symptoms of several other diseases. Patients may not develop the rash most commonly associated with Lyme disease, and symptoms may not appear for months to even years following the initial infection. Unfortunately, patients with Lyme disease are often misdiagnosed with more familiar conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fatigue, Fibromyalgia, Multiple Sclerosis, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, depression, or psychiatric illness. The Centers for Disease Control has cautioned medical professionals and citizens that its case definition used to report Lyme disease should not be used for clinical diagnosis, as many patients may not meet reporting criteria despite being affected; and

WHEREAS: The causes, symptoms, and treatment of Lyme disease is not entirely known, and continued research is needed to better understand and assist those with the infection. With more than a dozen tick-borne diseases now recognized in the Southeastern United States, citizens and medical providers must be prepared to address symptoms resulting from tick bites to prevent unnecessary illness. The State of Georgia encourages citizens to learn more about this disease and how they can protect themselves from infection; now

THEREFORE: I, NATHAN DEAL, Governor of the State of Georgia, do hereby proclaim May 2017 as LYME AND TICK-BORNE DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH in Georgia.

In witness thereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Executive Department to be affixed this 1st day of May in the year of our Lord two thousand seventeen.

Nathan Deal

GOVERNOR

ATTEST

Chris W. Riley

CHIEF OF STAFF