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PRESS RELEASE
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Governor Sununu Proclaims May 2019 Lyme Disease Awareness Month in New Hampshire

*NH DHHS and Tick Free NH Encourage Prevention Methods in State
with Fourth Highest Incident Rate of Lyme Disease*

Concord, NH – During the Governor and Council Meeting on Wednesday, May 15, 2019, Governor Chris Sununu proclaimed May as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in New Hampshire. Lyme disease is the most common tick-borne illness, as an estimated 240,000–444,000 new cases are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. The Governor’s proclamation encouraged residents and visitors to practice Lyme disease prevention strategies.

According to a survey commissioned by Tick Free NH, almost 30% of NH adults do not think they have a high or moderate risk of becoming infected with Lyme disease, and 60% cited incorrect tick removal methods.

“Lyme Disease is an indiscriminate illness that has touched every corner of New Hampshire,” said Governor Sununu. “It’s nearly impossible to go without meeting someone who has been affected. Lyme Disease has an absolutely debilitating effect that keeps far too many Granite Staters from living the lives they want to live. Whether you’re walking your dog, hiking in the White Mountains, or mowing your lawn, I urge everyone to exercise every possible precaution.”

The NH Department of Health and Human Services’ Division of Public Health Services, Bureau of Infectious Disease Control works to monitor the number of cases of tick-borne illnesses in the State each year. Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases including: anaplasmosis, babesiosis, Powassan virus and *Borrelia miyamotoi* are on the rise in New Hampshire. The increasing numbers of tick-borne infections highlights the need for greater awareness and prevention efforts across the State. The tick species of most concern in New Hampshire is the blacklegged tick, formerly called the deer tick. Rodents and deer are important hosts for ticks to survive in our environment. It is very important to consider ways to make your home and yard less attractive to them.

“The risk for tick-transmitted diseases, including Lyme disease, begins in New Hampshire when the snow melts and ticks emerge,” said Dr. Benjamin Chan, State Epidemiologist. “Now

that ticks are out, people should be taking steps to prevent tick bites, which is the best way to prevent illness from tick-borne infections.”

"When I talk with people in New Hampshire that have had Lyme disease or know people who have had it, they often speak about having to significantly slow down or miss work while sick. I believe this is having a large effect on our economy," shares Frank Grossman, the philanthropist behind the Tick Free NH initiative. "Tick Free NH is a public-private partnership with diverse stakeholders who are dedicated to raising awareness so that residents can protect themselves while enjoying our state.”

Lyme disease is a serious illness that can affect people of any age. The best ways to protect yourself from a tick bite are:

- Wear light-colored protective clothing and tuck your shirt into your pants and your pants into your socks.
- Treat your shoes and clothing with Permethrin - a chemical that repels and kills ticks, which is good for many washes.
- Apply tick repellent every time you go into a wooded, grassy, or brushy area – this includes gardening or playing in your lawn. Repellents with 20-30% DEET are effective, but there are other EPA repellants effective against ticks as well.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high for 10 minutes (or one hour for damp clothes) to kill ticks.
- Shower after being outside to wash off any unattached ticks
- Conduct a daily tick check for yourself, child and pets.

To learn about Tick Free NH, become a member or order materials, visit TickFreeNH.org, or email tickfreenh@jsi.com.

For more information about Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases, visit the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services [Lyme and Other Tick-borne Diseases](#) page or the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) website.

Note: A photo of Governor Sununu and Executive Councilors with representatives from DHHS and Tick Free NH is attached.

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