

**Lyme Disease Advisory Committee (LDAC) Spring Meeting  
March 22, 2019  
Minutes**

**Committee members in attendance**

Barbara Barsocchini, California Lyme Disease Association (LymeDisease.org) [via phone]  
Karen Chew, Lyme Disease Support Network [via phone]  
Vicki Kramer, PhD, California Department of Public Health (CDPH)  
Robert Lane, PhD, University of California, Berkeley  
Chris Parlier, Lyme Disease Support Network, Committee Chair  
Chindi Peavey, PhD, Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC)  
Raphael Stricker, MD, California Medical Association [via phone]

**Committee members absent**

Lisa Messner, Lyme Disease Support Network  
James Miller, PhD, University of California, Los Angeles  
Scott Morrow, MD, MPH, San Mateo County Health Department

**Other attendees**

CDPH staff included:

Kerry Padgett, PhD, Supervising Public Health Biologist  
Melissa Hardstone Yoshimizu, PhD, Senior Public Health Biologist  
Anne Kjemtrup, DVM, MPVM, PhD, Research Scientist  
Allyx Nicolici, MPH, CHES®, Health Educator  
Greg Hacker, MS, Associate Public Health Biologist  
Chris Kilonzo, DVM, MPVM, PhD, Associate Public Health Biologist  
Mary Beth Danforth, PhD, Epidemiologist  
Joe Burns, Senior Public Health Biologist [via phone]  
Leslie Foss, MS, Arbovirus Biologist [via phone]

Various members of local vector control agencies and the public joined the meeting in person and via phone.

**I. Roll Call and Opening Comments**

Meeting brought to order by Chris Parlier, LDAC Chair, at 10:00 am.

**II. Committee Member Updates**

**Dr. Robert Lane** provided an update about the UC Hopland Research and Extension Center that was affected by the Mendocino Complex Fire in 2018. Dr. Lane and a team of colleagues from UC Davis and UC Berkeley are planning to conduct a 2-year study to determine the impact of

that severe burn on tick and vertebrate abundance in a dense-woodland habitat. Dr. Lane and colleagues recently submitted a paper, led by Dr. Gabrielle Margos, identifying and describing a new genospecies of Lyme disease group spirochete that was isolated from an *Ixodes spinipalpis* tick collected at Anthony Chabot Regional Park in Alameda County.

**Dr. Vicki Kramer** shared that the CDC has produced two new guidance documents regarding surveillance for [Ixodes scapularis](#) and [Ixodes pacificus](#) ticks. CDPH has reviewed the documents, and will be adopting and implementing the use of sentinel sites to enhance tick surveillance in California. A link to the CDC guidance documents will be added to CDPH webpages.

### III. CDPH Progress Report

#### A. Education Update (Allyx Nicolici, MPH, CHES®)

Ms. Nicolici provided an overview of CDPH's tick-bite prevention education efforts since November 2018, including the continued distribution of brochures, tick identification cards, and social media posts for Facebook, Twitter, and now Instagram. CDPH tick information webpages were also reviewed; a new video about ticks was recently embedded on the [CDPH Tick-Borne Diseases webpage](#), and updates to the [CDPH Lyme Disease webpage](#) will be coming soon.

#### B. Surveillance Update (Melissa Yoshimizu, PhD)

Dr. Yoshimizu provided an update of reported Lyme disease cases and detections of *Borrelia* spp. infected *Ixodes pacificus* ticks collected and tested since October 2018. Rain events in recent months have significantly delayed surveillance efforts since the last LDAC meeting. Current CDPH projects and goals were also described, including surveillance enhancement in low-sampled areas and focusing on collecting and testing *I. pacificus* immature ticks.

The committee requested information on tick larvae collection and testing, the current protocols for testing *I. pacificus* immature ticks, and testing for *Borrelia turicatae*. The committee also had questions about the change in the surveillance case definition for Lyme disease, which now requires laboratory support when an erythema migrans (EM) rash is present if exposure was from a low-endemic state like California.

### IV. Identifying Areas of Suitable Habitat for *Ixodes pacificus* Ticks (Kerry Padgett, PhD)

Dr. Padgett provided an overview of a [recently published study](#) that investigated tick distribution models and tick collection databases to identify areas of climatic suitability for *Ixodes pacificus* in California. Variables selected for the models included precipitation, temperature, and vapor pressure. In summary, areas of California with warm, wet winters were determined to be most suitable for *I. pacificus* ticks. Dr. Padgett also explained survival requirements for *I. pacificus* ticks, including high relative humidity, and brought in a display of ticks in a humidity chamber to demonstrate.

The committee asked questions about the presence and collection of soft-bodied ticks in California and their potential to come in contact with humans. Because some soft-bodied ticks are found at higher elevations and underground in animal burrows, contact with humans is less likely; these ticks are not vectors of Lyme disease.

## **V. Discussion – Outreach and Education Materials (Allyx Nicolici, MPH, CHES®)**

### **A. Updates to Tick ID Card**

Ms. Nicolici provided an overview of the tick identification card that CDPH currently distributes and asked the committee for recommendations for content and style updates before more cards are printed. The committee and other attendees provided numerous suggestions that will make the card easier to read and more user-friendly. New ideas for card distribution were also discussed, including distribution to veterinary offices, scouting troops, and outdoor education organizations (FFA, 4H, etc.). Edits to the identification card will be incorporated and reviewed by LDAC members in the coming months.

### **B. Updates to Resources for Children and Families**

Ms. Nicolici provided an overview of the *Don't Let the Ticks Bite* toolkit that CDPH provides online as a resource for children, teachers, and parents about tick-bite prevention. Revisions were suggested to make the toolkit more age-appropriate, and ideas for the addition of new components (i.e., a habitat graphic) were discussed. CDPH's goal is to revise the toolkit and redistribute the digital contents to public health and vector control agencies, particularly those that do not have the resources to develop similar resources on their own. Updates to the toolkit will be forthcoming, and progress will be shared and discussed at future LDAC meetings.

## **VI. Public Comment**

A member of the public, who requested additional time to speak, commented on discrepancies in laboratory and insurance claims data regarding Lyme disease. This member expressed interest in patient advocacy and educating physicians about Lyme disease in order to reduce diagnostic and treatment delays for the illness. Committee members and CDPH staff addressed this member's concerns and noted limitations to data reported from regional laboratories and insurance companies. The committee and CDPH agreed that physician outreach is very important.

**Meeting adjourned at 12:47pm.**

The next LDAC meeting will be held in the fall of 2019 via conference call/WebEx. The specific date and time to be determined.