



OCT 20 2008

The Honorable Frank R. Wolf  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Wolf:

I am writing in response to your letter dated September 4, 2008, in which you requested that the Office of Inspector General (OIG) determine whether the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is justified in only using the Infectious Disease Society of America's (IDSA) Lyme disease guidelines given the host of questionable practices exposed during the IDSA approval process. Our Office of Investigations is currently reviewing the allegations identified in your letter. OIG will stay in touch with your staff as we determine appropriate action.

We appreciate your interest in the programs of the Department. If you have any questions regarding this matter, your staff may call Claire Barnard, Director of External Affairs, at (202) 205-9523.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Menke", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Timothy J. Menke  
Deputy Inspector General  
for Investigations



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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

September 4, 2008

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GENERAL

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RECEIVED

Mr. Daniel R. Levinson  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Room 5250 Cohen Building  
3330 Independence Ave SW  
Washington DC 20201

Dear Mr. Levinson:

I write today to inquire about the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) recognition of Lyme disease treatment guidelines set forth by the Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA). I have become concerned about the integrity of these standards. I understand other members of Congress have asked for an investigation into this matter and want to join that request.

Last month I held a Lyme Disease Forum in my congressional district and nearly 300 people took time out of their summer schedule to attend. Many in attendance suffer from Bell's palsy, meningitis and other manifestations of Lyme Disease. I have seen firsthand the devastation of this disease. Between 1999 and 2007, the number of reported cases of Lyme Disease in Loudoun County, Virginia, increased from 29 to over 200 cases per year.

I am aware that earlier this year Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal reported that his antitrust investigation exposed conflicts of interests in the process used by IDSA to write 2006 Lyme disease guidelines. Mr. Blumenthal's findings of undisclosed financial interests held by several of the IDSA panelists and the panel's exclusion of divergent scientific evidence and opinion were shocking. How do you explain this injustice to my constituents and others who suffer from chronic Lyme?

CDC continues to link to the IDSA guidelines. While CDC maintains that the IDSA has "given rigorous peer review of the IDSA guidelines," numerous congressional requests for an explanation of how peer review requirements are met remain unanswered. Furthermore, why is it that another set of guidelines compiled by another medical society, which have been published on the National Guidelines Clearing House, are not listed or taken into account by the CDC?

I request that the OIG investigate whether the CDC is justified in only using the IDSA Lyme guidelines given the host of questionable practices exposed during the IDSA approval process. There needs to be a concerted effort to ensure that clinicians working with Lyme disease patients and their families have all the tools necessary to treat this devastating disease.

I am committed to doing whatever I can to help address this issue and look forward to your response.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress

TIMOTHY J. WOLF

FRW:jp

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT