

**Youth Education Subcommittee
of the
Maine Vector-borne Disease Working Group¹**

Mission Statement:

The increase in human cases of Lyme disease throughout Maine has led to a need for classroom curricula that will address Lyme disease with our school age children. Through education about prevention, the curricula will enhance awareness and reduce the risk of contracting Lyme disease.

Goal:

Our multi-disciplinary committee will partner with fifth grade teachers to integrate a 120-minute Lyme disease lesson plan into the schools' existing curricula. The plan will be piloted in fifth grade classrooms during May, 2008.

Program Outcomes:

This new curriculum will contain age-appropriate goals, activities, and measurable guidelines, and include the following three general outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of tick ecology and identification
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of causes, symptoms and strategies for prevention of Lyme disease
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of how to apply the scientific method

Curriculum Materials:

The following materials will be provided, pending approval by Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services:

1. Student Packet – Grab bag containing: tick identification wallet card, Maine CDC public information pamphlet, tick bookmark, seven pages of activities, repellent fact sheet, website links sheet, and a tick removal spoon.
2. Teacher Educational Packet – Contents of student packets, Maine CDC “Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention” video, PBS TV special “WTIK: Do A Tick-Check” video, National Institutes of Health brochure “Lyme Disease: The Facts, the Challenge”, and a slide show produced by the Working Group.
3. School Nurse Information Packet- A general packet of information for nurses about the symptoms of Lyme disease and a protocol used in schools to help nurses identify students at risk for Lyme disease.

¹ The Maine Vector-borne Disease Workgroup is an assembly of state agencies and public health professionals, scientists and policy makers who come together to discuss innovative ways to combat the spread of vector borne disease, including West Nile virus, Lyme disease and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. The Work Group is convened bi-monthly by the Maine CDC. Over the past 15 years, the number of Lyme disease cases identified in Maine has increased dramatically, with approximately 500 case reports received in 2007. This steady rise in Lyme disease incidence and the continued threat of West Nile virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis has inspired much of the work and collaborative efforts embarked upon by this group.

Timeline:

Phase I:

Committee members will work with fifth grade science and health teachers from Kittery, Kennebunk, and York middle schools to produce a 120-minute lesson plan that will be piloted in their classrooms. Committee members will provide expertise and technical assistance to the project as needed. Project activities are expected to reach 100 students during this phase. NB: As of Jan. 25, 2008 we have 17 teachers, 3 nurses, and 351 students on board.

Phase II:

The curriculum resources will be disseminated to other fifth grade teachers throughout the state by presentation at forums such as Project Learning Tree, Maine Science Teachers Association, and EcoScience Works Project. During these presentations, teachers will be asked to volunteer to adopt the new curricula with hopes that activities would reach thousands of students in subsequent years.

Members and affiliations of the Working Group:

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