

**Pat Smith President, Lyme Disease Association, Inc.**  
**NY Rally for our treating physicians November 9**  
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Today is a historic day for Lyme disease. Today marks a turning point in the war against our doctors. Today, we draw a line in the sand with our treating doctors on one side and the "ivory tower establishment" on the other.

Whoever dares to cross the line from this point forward and threatens our doctors' right to treat, needs to understand that we will no longer sit idly by. We, as a community, a united national Lyme community, will marshal all the forces we have at our command, whether they be political, medical, scientific, legal, or otherwise, against them.

The GAO investigation taking place in Washington, DC, right at this very moment is only the first step. State by state, we will get legislators, governors, and other officials to listen to us by educating them and presenting not only the science but also the overwhelming numbers of chronic Lyme patients coast to coast. The LDA has already helped initiated this process in several states through health commissioners and state boards. Additionally, we have begun to focus Washington's attention on Lyme disease through the Lyme Disease Initiative.

We will deluge our legislators with information and with patient horror stories, forcing them to acknowledge the graveness of the situation, a situation which exists for both our patients and our treating doctors! We will continue to demand bias investigations of all agencies and/or licensing boards who place our doctors' right to treat Lyme in jeopardy. These boards generally operate with public funds, and we after all, are members of that public, and we must demand the same rights as all other disease victims have: the right to be treated by our doctors as they deem medically necessary, the right to be treated with long-term antibiotics, if necessary, and the right to be treated with dignity. If they can treat long term for acne, they can treat long term for Lyme disease.

We will deluge those who espouse a twenty-eight day treatment course without any science backing, with cases and literature to prove otherwise.

We will leave no stones unturned in the search for consultants who may be paid with public dollars who advocate this unsubstantiated treatment regimen. We will raise funds for researchers whose minds are open to the complexity of the Lyme disease organism. We will support our doctors who have organized through ILADS and other professional organizations to become an effective force to restore what is rightfully theirs, the ability to treat patients in a climate free from political interference.

This national disgrace perpetrated upon us by vested interests must end. It began in New Jersey ten years ago with one of the most knowledgeable Lyme doctors brought before the medical board, and although the investigation was subsequently dropped, he was later branded a "quack" by some of his peers. It continued in New Jersey with another prominent Lyme doctor who took his own life after being charged. Another, and another, and yet another followed until our treating doctors in New Jersey began to leave the state or go in hiding and not treat Lyme. Insurance companies rejected patient claims, and I believe, as a result of that, many doctors have withdrawn from insurance plans which further cuts off patients' treatment.

Alabama, Michigan, Oregon, Texas, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and New York followed suit. Doctors' offices were entered, records pulled, licenses revoked, fines levied, and stipulations were attached to licenses. Most often, it has been the doctors who are in the forefront of treatment who have suffered. Why? I believe, to scare the remainder. Up until now, that strategy may have been effective, but it will work no longer, because we will no longer allow it.

Dr. Burrascano, like those who went before him, has stuck out his neck for the Lyme community and has produced sensible, clinically based published guidelines to help other doctors help us. Now, we must help him and all his colleagues. The message needs to be a clear one: **Leave our treating doctors practice the medicine they have been trained to practice, which involves all the knowledge, skills, and clinical judgement they possess.** If you cross that line in the sand to attack our doctors, we in turn will attack you with all the science, bodies, and medical and legal expertise it takes to eradicate you as a threat to our treatment and, indeed, to our very lives and the lives of our children.

Thank you.