

**The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council**

**EDUCATION & HEALTH
and LEGISLATION**



DATE: March 20, 2017

Shared Communiqué #1

Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call

TO: Diocesan Chairpersons of Education and Health; Diocesan Chairpersons of Legislation
CC: Provincial Executive (for information)
CC: National Chairperson of Education and Health; National Chairperson of Legislation (for information)

FROM: Linda Vandenberg, Provincial Chairperson of Education and Health and Betsy Fletcher, Provincial Chairperson of Legislation
ATT: Members of the Catholic Women's League, Provincial

RE: Lyme Disease

A short video clip of Calgary MP Len Webber was recently shared on Facebook. In the clip from the House of Commons question period on October 19, 2016, MP Webber was passionate about Lyme Disease. He asked the Federal Government to get to work to promote better awareness among health practitioners and better public awareness.

Bill C-442 An Act respecting A Federal Framework on Lyme Disease was sponsored by MP Elizabeth May in the House of Commons. This Bill achieved Royal Assent on December 16, 2014. From that Bill, a conference on Lyme Disease was planned. The Canadian Public Health Agency held a conference to develop a federal framework on Lyme Disease, May 15 - 17 2016. Participants included Canadians from all areas of this issue from medical practitioners to scientists to patients. The conference focused on medical surveillance, education and awareness and guidelines and best practices. Among the key messages were statements that Canada's medical system has failed Lyme disease patients and that the resulting suffering spans physical, mental and financial realms. Participants acknowledged that there is a great deal of work needed in creating awareness in the medical profession, and educate Canadian doctors in correct diagnosis and treatment of Lyme Disease. This conference has begun dialogue between healthcare professionals and their patients. However, the Catholic Women's League members need to continue keeping this issue in the forefront of discussions with the federal and provincial

government. Information on the conference can be found at the following link:

<http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/publications/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/summary-report-lyme-2016-conference-rapport-sommaire/index-eng.php>

Later on that month, May 31, 2016, in the Alberta Legislature, Health Minister Sarah Hoffman stated, during question period, that the Alberta Government is "...going to work with Health Canada to make sure that across Canada we have the very best up to date measures to make sure that we're protecting citizens." (Hansard May 31, 2016) She went on to advise the wearing of long sleeves and pants to prevent infection from contact with ticks. Alberta Health and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry will continue to monitor results from a passive program to determine if more surveillance is required. Passive tick surveillance is the reporting by veterinarians of ticks found on companion animals.

Clearly, both levels of Government intend to do something about Lyme Disease in Canada. It is important that we stay on top of this important issue. Continuing to review the work done is the best way to ensure that our government follows through on finding ways to help those who have been affected by Lyme Disease as well as making sure that all stakeholders are aware of how to prevent being infected by Lyme Disease. Writing letters to the Provincial Government asking them to stay on top of what the Federal Government is doing and informing Albertans on their progress is a place to start.

God bless us all.

Respectfully Submitted

Linda VandenBerg

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Education and Health Committee

Betsy Fletcher

Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Legislation Committee