

Some background on the Vt. Department of Health Lyme Disease Survey

E-mail from Rep. Chris Pearson, 2/18/15

[Posted to web page 3/10/15, under Harry Chen and Lyme Disease]

Committee members,

I met with Commissioner of Health, Dr. Chen, to discuss the Lyme survey that many of us are hearing about. He explained the survey is an attempt to act as a check since the only way the department hears about cases of Lyme is by doctors reporting incidents.

Commissioner Chen stressed to me that the survey is voluntary. Any question can be skipped. All of it is confidential. None of the information will be shared with the Medical Review Board (which regulates doctors).

Feel free to ask me questions if you have them. At some point after crossover we are likely to have Commissioner Chen in to explain this on the record.

Best,
Chris

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Chen, Harry" <Harry.Chen@state.vt.us>

Date: February 17, 2015 at 11:52:49 AM EST

To: "cpearson@leg.state.vt.us" <cpearson@leg.state.vt.us>

Subject: Some background on the Lyme Survey: VDH Lyme Disease Survey

This survey is completely voluntary and no one has to participate. People who choose to participate are free to skip any of the questions they find problematic.

The purpose of the survey is to help the Vermont Department of Health assess its current surveillance system and to learn more about the burden of disease on Vermonters who have been diagnosed with Lyme disease.

All answers will be kept confidential. Any reports generated out of this project will not contain personal or individual information, and that too would include provider names.

The Vermont Department of Health has a long track record of receiving confidential information, including highly sensitive information, and maintaining strict confidentiality. We take great pride in this and consider it a very important professional duty. This web survey method was vetted by our IT staff and found to be secure and in compliance with the requirements of HIPAA.

This is a new and novel surveillance method. As far as we know, self-reporting of Lyme disease has not been tried before. We have just launched this project, and it is too soon to know whether we will be able to get useful information from this effort. However, we think it is worth trying.

I can't stress enough that no one is required to participate.

The Infectious Disease Epidemiology Section is the program within the Health Department that is conducting this survey. Only epidemiology staff who are involved in reviewing or analyzing the information will have access to answers provided by participants. None of the information will be shared with any other Health Department program.