Committee members in attendance

Barbara Barsocchini, California Lyme Disease Association (LymeDisease.org) [via phone]
Karen Chew, Lyme Disease Support Network [via phone]
Vicki Kramer, PhD, California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
Robert Lane, PhD, University of California, Berkeley
Chris Parlier, Lyme Disease Support Network, Committee Chair
Chindi Peavey, PhD, Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC)
Raphael Stricker, MD, California Medical Association [via phone]

Committee members absent

Lisa Messner, Lyme Disease Support Network
James Miller, PhD, University of California, Los Angeles
Scott Morrow, MD, MPH, San Mateo County Health Department

Other attendees

CDPH staff included:

Kerry Padgett, PhD, Supervising Public Health Biologist
Melissa Hardstone Yoshimizu, PhD, Senior Public Health Biologist
Anne Kjemtrup, DVM, MPVM, PhD, Research Scientist
Allyx Nicolici, MPH, CHES®, Health Educator
Greg Hacker, MS, Associate Public Health Biologist
Chris Kilonzo, DVM, MPVM, PhD, Associate Public Health Biologist
Mary Beth Danforth, PhD, Epidemiologist
Joe Burns, Senior Public Health Biologist [via phone]
Leslie Foss, MS, Arbovirus Biologist [via phone]

Various members of local vector control agencies and the public joined the meeting in person and via phone.

I. Roll Call and Opening Comments

Meeting brought to order by Chris Parlier, LDAC Chair, at 10:00 am.

II. Committee Member Updates

Dr. Robert Lane provided an update about the UC Hopland Research and Extension Center that was affected by the Mendocino Complex Fire in 2018. Dr. Lane and a team of colleagues from UC Davis and UC Berkeley are planning to conduct a 2-year study to determine the impact of
that severe burn on tick and vertebrate abundance in a dense-woodland habitat. Dr. Lane and
colleagues recently submitted a paper, led by Dr. Gabrielle Margos, identifying and describing a
new genospecies of Lyme disease group spirochete that was isolated from an _Ixodes spinipalpis_
tick collected at Anthony Chabot Regional Park in Alameda County.

Dr. Vicki Kramer shared that the CDC has produced two new guidance documents regarding
surveillance for _Ixodes scapularis_ and _Ixodes pacificus_ ticks. CDPH has reviewed the documents,
and will be adopting and implementing the use of sentinel sites to enhance tick surveillance in
California. A link to the CDC guidance documents will be added to CDPH webpages.

III. CDPH Progress Report

A. Education Update (Allyx Nicolici, MPH, CHES®)

Ms. Nicolici provided an overview of CDPH’s tick-bite prevention education efforts since
November 2018, including the continued distribution of brochures, tick identification cards,
and social media posts for Facebook, Twitter, and now Instagram. CDPH tick information
webpages were also reviewed; a new video about ticks was recently embedded on the
CDPH Tick-Borne Diseases webpage, and updates to the CDPH Lyme Disease webpage will
be coming soon.

B. Surveillance Update (Melissa Yoshimizu, PhD)

Dr. Yoshimizu provided an update of reported Lyme disease cases and detections of _Borrelia_
spp. infected _Ixodes pacificus_ ticks collected and tested since October 2018. Rain events in
recent months have significantly delayed surveillance efforts since the last LDAC meeting.
Current CDPH projects and goals were also described, including surveillance enhancement
in low-sampled areas and focusing on collecting and testing _I. pacificus_ immature ticks.

The committee requested information on tick larvae collection and testing, the current
protocols for testing _I. pacificus_ immature ticks, and testing for _Borrelia turicatae_. The
committee also had questions about the change in the surveillance case definition for Lyme
disease, which now requires laboratory support when an erythema migrans (EM) rash is
present if exposure was from a low-endemic state like California.

IV. Identifying Areas of Suitable Habitat for _Ixodes pacificus_ Ticks (Kerry Padgett, PhD)

Dr. Padgett provided an overview of a recently published study that investigated tick
distribution models and tick collection databases to identify areas of climatic suitability for
_Ixodes pacificus_ in California. Variables selected for the models included precipitation,
temperature, and vapor pressure. In summary, areas of California with warm, wet winters were
determined to be most suitable for _I. pacificus_ ticks. Dr. Padgett also explained survival
requirements for _I. pacificus_ ticks, including high relative humidity, and brought in a display of
ticks in a humidity chamber to demonstrate.
The committee asked questions about the presence and collection of soft-bodied ticks in California and their potential to come in contact with humans. Because some soft-bodied ticks are found at higher elevations and underground in animal burrows, contact with humans is less likely; these ticks are not vectors of Lyme disease.

V. Discussion – Outreach and Education Materials (Allyx Nicolici, MPH, CHES®)

A. Updates to Tick ID Card

Ms. Nicolici provided an overview of the tick identification card that CDPH currently distributes and asked the committee for recommendations for content and style updates before more cards are printed. The committee and other attendees provided numerous suggestions that will make the card easier to read and more user-friendly. New ideas for card distribution were also discussed, including distribution to veterinary offices, scouting troops, and outdoor education organizations (FFA, 4H, etc.). Edits to the identification card will be incorporated and reviewed by LDAC members in the coming months.

B. Updates to Resources for Children and Families

Ms. Nicolici provided an overview of the Don’t Let the Ticks Bite toolkit that CDPH provides online as a resource for children, teachers, and parents about tick-bite prevention. Revisions were suggested to make the toolkit more age-appropriate, and ideas for the addition of new components (i.e., a habitat graphic) were discussed. CDPH’s goal is to revise the toolkit and redistribute the digital contents to public health and vector control agencies, particularly those that do not have the resources to develop similar resources on their own. Updates to the toolkit will be forthcoming, and progress will be shared and discussed at future LDAC meetings.

VI. Public Comment

A member of the public, who requested additional time to speak, commented on discrepancies in laboratory and insurance claims data regarding Lyme disease. This member expressed interest in patient advocacy and educating physicians about Lyme disease in order to reduce diagnostic and treatment delays for the illness. Committee members and CDPH staff addressed this member’s concerns and noted limitations to data reported from regional laboratories and insurance companies. The committee and CDPH agreed that physician outreach is very important.

Meeting adjourned at 12:47pm.

The next LDAC meeting will be held in the fall of 2019 via conference call/WebEx. The specific date and time to be determined.