



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF

HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH *Commissioner*

## 2015 Veterinary Advisory # 3: Canine Lyme Disease Surveillance in New York City

- **Starting in May 2015, the New York City Health Department will begin surveillance for canine Lyme disease.**
- **Initial efforts will focus on Staten Island.**
- **Veterinarians and dog owners will be asked to participate in telephone interviews.**

*Please share with your colleagues in Veterinary Medicine and your staff*

May 13, 2015

Dear Veterinary Colleagues,

The New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) will soon be conducting laboratory report-based surveillance for canine Lyme disease. Efforts will initially focus on dogs that reside on Staten Island. This is being done as a complement to human Lyme disease surveillance to help identify local transmission of Lyme disease.

There is a growing interest in Lyme disease, particularly on Staten Island, due to the increasing deer population. The abundance of deer could result in an increase in the number of blacklegged ticks (*Ixodes scapularis* or deer tick) since deer are the preferred host of adult blacklegged ticks. Tick surveillance by the DOHMH has found the blacklegged tick on Staten Island, though in small numbers. The more commonly collected tick is the American dog tick (*Dermacentor variabilis*), which does not transmit Lyme disease.

To conduct canine Lyme disease surveillance, the DOHMH will investigate positive Lyme disease reports in dogs from a commercial veterinary diagnostic laboratory ordered by Staten Island veterinary practices. Similar to our canine leptospirosis surveillance system, the DOHMH will investigate these reports by contacting the veterinarian who ordered the test to obtain clinical information as well as the dog owner to obtain travel and risk factor information. Feel free to contact us with any questions at 347-396-2600.

For more information on reportable diseases, fact sheets, and other guidance, visit the Zoonotic, & Vectorborne Provider Information page at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/diseases/zoo.shtml>.

Veterinarians play an important role in the reporting of animal communicable diseases. As always, we greatly appreciate your partnership and cooperation.

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