

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Janet Wood](#)
Subject: FW: Testimony for the Texas Medical Board
Date: Monday, December 12, 2016 8:09:44 AM

From: Suz Moulton
Sent: Sunday, December 11, 2016 1:13 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Testimony for the Texas Medical Board

Dear Sirs/Madams: My name is Suzanne Moulton and I live in Leander, Texas. I am a business owner and have also founded and led non-profit organizations outside of and within the State of Texas to serve local community needs, as well as single mothers. I have served as VP of a 1K+ home HOA in Cedar Park and have sat on numerous volunteer community committees for churches and other non-profit organizations. I am also a single mother of 18 years to an incredible young woman who is now attending Baylor to pursue a high school science teaching degree. To say that I had led an EXTREMELY active life up until contracting Lyme Disease is a HUGE understatement!

In 2008, my daughter (11 at the time) and I were both bit by ticks. She fell extremely ill within the first week and, after all other potential diagnoses were ruled out, was treated at Dell Children's Hospital here in Austin for a possible tick-borne disease. Thankfully, having been treated with 30 days of antibiotics so soon after her bite, my daughter quickly recovered and has had no further known ramifications. I, on the other hand, have not been as fortunate.

My symptoms had not manifested to any great degree at that time, except for a bullseye rash - which I thought was ring worm. My numerous other symptoms began as what appeared to be random and were not associated with one another by any physician I sought medical care from:

- ~apparent thyroid issues were addressed by an endocrinologist;
- ~quick, onset bone spurs/fasciitis in both feet was addressed by a podiatrist;
- ~severe pain in knees, lower back, etc., were addressed by an orthopedic surgeon, as well as a rheumatologist;
- ~intense fatigue, skin changes, etc., were suspected peri-menopausal and addressed by my gyn;
- ~tinnitus and vertigo were addressed by an ENT;
- ~heart issues in the ER

...the list goes on.

The solution from nearly every physician was to 'med me up', as well as suggest Xanax and/or some type of psychological referral (after humiliating interrogations about family history into mental illness, etc.. - for which there is none).

Despite my suggestions to each of them that all of my symptoms had to somehow be connected, NO medical professional in the State of Texas gave credence to same and simply dismissed my suspicions as me being medically uneducated and 'emotional' (other than my endocrinologist, who tried - to connect all of the dots - unsuccessfully).

Although I contracted Lyme in 2008, this cycle of uneducated insanity and prejudice from the medical community continued until 2013.

In July 2013, after reading about a woman who had walked an extremely similar medically scary and frustrating

path was found to have Lyme Disease, I began researching this as a possibility. I quickly landed on the Texas Lyme Disease Association's webpage and was dumbfounded when I read through the symptoms list. IT WAS ALL RIGHT THERE!!

From there, I was able to connect with a Lyme literate specialist in Denton, Texas - albeit nearly 3 months later, as the wait lists are insane due to the lack of Lyme literate doctors educated and brave enough to treat Lyme Disease.

At my first visit (which was over an hour long), after reviewing all of my medical records from the past nearly 6 yrs, as well as asking question after question about my journey, I was officially diagnosed with Lyme Disease and several coinfections (Bartonella, Babesia, Tularemia - later confirmed in blood work). FINALLY someone heard me and actually knew how to treat me! SIDE NOTE: When I informed my primary care physician that I had been diagnosed with Lyme Disease and asked if she would continue to treat me for non-Lyme related ailments, as well as be a part of my Lyme treatment team, she declined offering any further treatment to me, whatsoever, and our relationship was then terminated at her request.

It is now December 2016 and I am nearing the end of my treatment - Yes - 3+ yrs later! And although I know 2017 will be focused on and consumed with me working towards regaining my strength and stamina I've lost during these past 3 years, I AM hopeful that I will be able to resume an active lifestyle once again (notwithstanding potential relapses as there is currently no known cure for Lyme Disease). This is so much more than many Lyme Disease sufferers are blessed with.

While I have just touched on the medical/symptom/recovery side of my journey, I'd be remiss in not mentioning the financial toll the lack of Lyme-educated physicians in the State of Texas has taken on me and my family. In my 41 years, I had rarely ever been sick or had to see a doctor. At last count, I believe there were 13 physicians and specialists I saw (many repeatedly) over that 5 years of un- and mis-diagnoses.

Because I have a \$3,500 deductible, the majority of any medical treatment and resulting prescriptions, tests, etc., I received were typically out-of-pocket - not to mention that I have had to pay out-of-pocket for my current treatment due to the refusal by insurance companies to recognize Late Stage Lyme Disease, let alone pay for any treatment associated with same. As you can imagine, this depleted any potential savings and put an additional strain on me just to keep my head above water while raising my daughter alone.

I was 41 when I contracted Lyme Disease. I am now 49. I have lost nearly a decade of my life; one during which arguably SHOULD have been the most enjoyable and productive decade of my life! Had ANY of the doctors during that 5+ years been educated in Lyme Disease, they could have easily suspected Lyme as the culprit and early treatment could have spared me from or, at the very least, shortened this prolonged horrific experience.

With the number of Lyme Disease victims growing every year (CDC now reports 300K+ new cases each year in the US), this epidemic can go unnoticed no longer and pro-activity to educate and treat is imperative. It is a continually growing epidemic that more Texans are going to be affected by and will require educated physicians to help them recover!

MY PLEA TO YOU IS THIS:

1. Mandate that the Texas Medical Board be required to educate Texas doctors about Lyme Disease (and its co-infections); including consistent links with updated information on the website, in the newsletter, etc., in addition to much needed annual CME education requirements.

2. Include Lyme Literate doctors on the Texas Medical Board. 3. Recognize International Lyme and Associated Disease Society (ILADS) Guidelines, data and statistics as a valid and imperative resource in treatment of Lyme Disease. (As acknowledged by the National Guideline Clearinghouse under the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services)

4. Don't let Texans suffering from Lyme Disease fall off your radar.

Thank you for taking the time to review my testimony. I am available to answer any further questions, should you have any.

Warmest regards,

Suzanne Moulton