

**BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MICHIGAN TESTIMONY**  
**House Health Policy Committee**  
**Kristen Kraft, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan**  
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Thank you Chair Vaupel and members of the House Health Policy Committee. I am Kristen Kraft, Director of State Relations for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan. On behalf of BCBSM, I appreciate the opportunity to come before you to share our concerns with House Bills 4604 and 4609, as written.

Lyme disease is a painful and difficult to treat condition. We understand the challenges it brings for our members suffering from this illness, which is why Blue Cross currently supports and covers the diagnosis and evidence-based medical treatment of Lyme disease. Our coverage plan follows established treatments guidelines recognized by the Centers for Infectious Disease Control (CDC) and that American Institute of Family Medicine, that have proven to be safe and effective. We believe other insurers take a similar approach.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Lyme disease is usually curable with common antibiotics when identified in the early stages. Late identification of Lyme disease has been identified as “post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome” or PTLDS. There are conflicting views about the various treatment options, and the prolonged use of long-term antibiotics is cause for concern. Established guidelines by the CDC and Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) warn that long-term antibiotic use or alternative treatments for Lyme disease have been associated with serious complications.

Accordingly, clinical recommendations by the American Academy of Family Physicians, for instance, state that prolonged antibiotic therapy for PTLDS, beyond the standard recommendations, provides no benefit and is not recommended. Moreover, the [CDC](#) and [Michigan Department of Health and Human Services](#) have identified that the inappropriate use and overuse of antibiotics contributes to the development of bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics, which limits the tools we have to treat serious infections going forward.

In an emerging area of clinical medicine, we are concerned with a government mandate for treatment protocol that is not agreed upon by the medical community. Blue Cross does recognize the appropriate use of antibiotics for extended treatment periods for certain disease indications, done in consultation with providers.

Blue Cross recognizes the need for continued research and education to understand and appropriately treat Lyme disease, and constantly updates its policies to provide coverage for medically proven diagnosis and treatment options. Providers should be accountable for practicing according to evidence-based standards of care and insurers should retain the ability to support the coverage of Lyme disease diagnostic testing and treatments that are established and evidence-based.

We thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns with House Bills 4604 and 4609, regarding the mandated coverage of unspecified treatments for Lyme disease, and also House Bills 4605 and 4607, which has the potential of encouraging overprescribing of long-term antibiotics.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.