

OSHECCOM ISSUE PAPER

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SUBMITTED TO THE OSHECCOM THROUGH: Michael Thomas, Ph.D.

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SUBJECT: Preventing Complications Related to Lyme Disease

BACKGROUND:

Lyme Disease is a vector-borne infectious disease, reported by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to be the most commonly recognized vector-borne illnesses in the United States. Lyme disease is an infection caused by the bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi*, and is transmitted by the bite of several known tick (*Ixodes*) species. The New England Regional OSHECCOM has recommended that the agency reimburse agency employees for the cost of obtaining Lyme vaccine. Please see their separate issue paper.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

PASS and AAM joint recommendation:

Increased employee education concerning the prevention and means of early detection (signs & symptoms) of Lyme Disease, as appropriate.

AAM recommendation:

Based on the currently available information, due to the potential for irreversible complications to be triggered by formulations currently available in the United States, Lyme vaccinations should not be required, recommended, or reimbursed, by the agency or any LOB. Employees have the option to discuss the potential risks and benefits, and to obtain Lyme vaccinations, with their private physicians.

PASS recommendations:

1. At risk employees who choose to be vaccinated should be reimbursed by the agency after: being provided with the appropriate education and information; and after discussing the risks and benefits of vaccination with their private physicians.
2. Vaccinations should not be provided or made available by the agency.