



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

970-221-6400

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Emerging & Zoonotic Diseases
Division of Vector-Borne Diseases
3156 Rampart Road
Fort Collins, Colorado 80521

February 18, 2020

Dear Mr. Fries,

We have reviewed your information quality request for correction related to the geographic distribution of Lyme disease. In your request, you have asked that corrections be made to the Lyme Disease Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) webpage at www.cdc.gov/lyme/faq/. Specifically, you have asked for the answer to the question, "Is it true that you can get Lyme disease anywhere in the U.S.?" from "no" to "yes". After careful review and consideration, we do not believe that the evidence supports a revision of these materials.

Your request states that "The map at www.cdc.gov/lyme/datasurveillance/maps-recent.html clearly shows that Lyme disease occurs throughout the U.S." However, as the text that accompanies the map indicates, the location of cases is based on the patient's state of residence, not where they acquired the infection:

1 dot placed randomly within county of residence for each confirmed case

Each dot represents one case of Lyme disease and is placed randomly in the patient's county of residence. The presence of a dot in a state does not necessarily mean that Lyme disease was acquired in that state. People travel between states, and the place of residence is sometimes different from the place where the patient became infected.

The appearance of a dot in a particular state or county is not evidence that the person became infected in that state or county, and the occasional appearance of dots in all 50 states is not evidence that the disease can be acquired anywhere in the country.

While we recognize that the geographic distribution shown in the map may be confusing to some viewers, we must comply with disease reporting standards established by state health departments nationwide.

If you wish to appeal this response to your request for a correction, you may send a written hard copy or electronic request for reconsideration within 30 days of receipt of the agency's decision. The appeal must state the reasons why the agency response is insufficient or inadequate. You must attach a copy of the original request and the agency's response to it. Clearly mark the appeal with the words, "Information Quality Appeal," and send the appeal by mail to CDC/ATSDR, Attn: Mailstop D-72 (attn.: Office of Science Quality); 1600 Clifton Road, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30333 or by e-mail to InfoQuality@cdc.gov.

Best regards,

Lyle Petersen, MD, MPH (Signed by C. Ben Beard, PhD, Acting Director, on behalf of Dr. Petersen)
Director, Division of Vector-Borne Diseases
National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention