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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Lyme disease, the most frequently diagnosed
2 insect-borne disease in the country, was first confirmed in Texas
3 in 1984; since then, countless state residents have suffered the
4 effects of this painful disease, yet their efforts to seek
5 appropriate medical care are often stymied; and

6 WHEREAS, Transmitted by the bite of an infected tick or flea,
7 Lyme disease is caused by a specialized type of bacteria called a
8 spirochete; people of all ages are susceptible to the disease,
9 which can cause skin, joint, heart, and nervous system problems and
10 which, if not adequately treated, can continue for months or years;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, Most easily and effectively treated during its early
13 stage, the disease is commonly overlooked because many people do
14 not realize that they have been bitten; a bull's-eye rash is the
15 only certain sign of Lyme disease, but not everyone who has been
16 infected develops a rash, and other symptoms may not occur until as
17 many as eight weeks after a bite; diagnosis is further complicated
18 by the fact that the biological markers of the disease are not
19 necessarily reliable and do not always appear in laboratory tests;
20 the longer a person has the disease, the harder it is to eradicate;
21 and

22 WHEREAS, Although some studies have shown that most patients
23 can be cured of Lyme disease with a few weeks of oral antibiotics,
24 many patients continue to report symptoms long after an initial

1 round of treatment; in those cases, the International Lyme and
2 Associated Diseases Society recommends continuing antibiotic
3 treatment "for several months after clinical and laboratory
4 abnormalities have begun to resolve and symptoms have disappeared";
5 however, because this method differs from the one promoted by the
6 Infectious Disease Society of America and other organizations,
7 health care professionals often face the loss of their medical
8 licenses for pursuing it; and

9 WHEREAS, The number of Texas physicians who attempt to treat
10 chronic Lyme disease patients has shrunk, and
11 patients--debilitated by such symptoms as fatigue, muscle and joint
12 pain, headaches, nausea, anxiety, depression, and Bell's
13 palsy--are forced to either travel out of state to gain access to
14 care or forgo treatment altogether; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the 81st Legislature of the State of Texas
16 hereby request the lieutenant governor and the speaker of the house
17 of representatives to provide for a joint interim legislative study
18 on the availability of medical treatment for patients with Lyme
19 disease in Texas.