

from Leslie Feinberg August 2011 transgenderwarrior.org  
my research notes on the medical politics driving the “Lyme Wars”

**Part 8:**  
**IDSAs credibility called into question**

In the Lyme wars: "At issue is the very credibility of the IDSA [Infectious Diseases Society of America], which activists say holds much sway over the medical establishment," emphasized Suzan Erem in her article headlined "Lyme disease politics put patients at risk." (voicesweb.org)

The ruling Lyme medical guidelines in the U.S. are set by the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), which first published them in 2000 and updated them in 2006.

As the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) was about to update its guidelines in 2006, Phyllis Mervine, president of the California Lyme Disease Association, described the members of the IDSA as:

"Seven men with financial ties to the insurance industry, developers of Lyme test kits and holders of patents related to Lyme disease, [who] are currently putting the final touches on treatment guidelines that we expect the Infectious Disease Society of America (IDSA) to approve soon. These men refused to meet with patient leaders to hear our concerns." (www.personalconsult.com)

When the IDSA issued its updated guidelines in 2006, patient groups and doctors who treat people with Lyme expressed outrage. The updated guidelines stated categorically that there is "no convincing biologic evidence" that Lyme is not cured with a short course of 2-4 weeks of antibiotics.

Grassroots patient advocacy groups—including, reportedly, the New Jersey-based Lyme Disease Association, Connecticut-based Time for Lyme and the California Lyme Disease Association--pressed Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal to investigate. (ilads.org)

According to a reference in an editorial on the website of the Connecticut Business News Journal, "Researchers at Yale, UCONN and across the country did try to convince Blumenthal to withdraw" what this journal calls "his attack on the scientific group." (www.contact.com)

After a two-year study of the 2006 IDSA Lyme, Attorney General of Connecticut Richard Blumenthal announced on May 1, 2008, "My office uncovered undisclosed financial interests held by several of the most powerful IDSA panelists.

"The IDSA's guideline panel improperly ignored or minimized consideration of alternative medical opinion and evidence regarding chronic Lyme disease, potentially raising serious questions about whether the recommendations reflected all relevant

science."

He added, "The IDSA's 2006 Lyme disease guideline panel undercut its credibility by allowing individuals with financial interests--in drug companies, Lyme disease diagnostic tests, patents and consulting arrangements with insurance companies--to exclude divergent medical evidence and opinion."

The Attorney General's investigation also found that the "IDSA sought to portray a second set of Lyme disease guidelines issued by the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) as independently corroborating its findings. In fact, IDSA knew that the two panels shared key members, including the respective panel chairmen and were working on both sets of guidelines at the same time—a violation of IDSA's conflicts of interest policy." (www.ct.gov)

*Next: IDSA's new Lyme guidelines panel: 'unbalanced and biased'*