

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

**Part 9:  
IDSA's new Lyme guidelines panel: 'unbalanced and biased'**

The Connecticut Attorney General's office announced on May 1, 2008, that its antitrust investigation, "uncovered serious flaws in the Infectious Diseases Society of America's (IDSA) process for writing its 2006 Lyme disease guidelines and the IDSA has agreed to reassess them with the assistance of an outside arbiter."

The Attorney General's office also announced on that day, "Our agreement with IDSA ensures that a new, conflicts-free panel will collect and review all pertinent information, reassess each recommendation and make necessary changes." ([www.ct.gov](http://www.ct.gov))

In late January 2009, the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) announced the selection of 10 new panelists and a chairperson for the guidelines review. Three grassroots Lyme patient organizations quickly issued a joint statement calling the new panel "unbalanced and biased." ([www.ilads.org](http://www.ilads.org))

Pat Smith, president of the Lyme Disease Association, said 18 physicians who treated persistent Lyme applied to the panel and were all excluded. ([www.lymedisease.org](http://www.lymedisease.org))

All Lyme disease treating physicians who applied for a seat were reportedly denied, based on having a "conflict" if they made over \$10,000 treating Lyme disease.

"They have confused helping patients get better with 'real' competing conflicts such as interests in testing and vaccines, and relationships with insurers--a profile found in the original panel. Physicians who treat understand what makes patients well."  
([www.lymedisease.org](http://www.lymedisease.org))

Congressional Co-Chair of the House Lyme Disease Caucus—Christopher Smith from New Jersey, whose population is hit hard by the Lyme—told patient groups, "I share concerns raised about exclusion of physicians who treat persisting Lyme and the composition of the panel."

After a delay in meeting the deadline for a final report, the Lyme Disease Review Panel of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) finally issued its statement on the organization's controversial 2006 Lyme guidelines on April 22, 2010.

The IDSA announced: "Based on its review of all the evidence and information provided, the Review Panel determined that no changes to the 2006 Lyme disease guideline are necessary at this time." (report online)

The IDSA official statement once again maintained: "The most common tick-borne illness, Lyme disease, is treated with a short course of antibiotics." ([idsociety.org](http://idsociety.org))

*Next: IDSA charged with using improper voting procedures*