

**Part 10:**  
**IDSA charged with using improper voting procedures**

Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal sent a letter to the Infectious Diseases Society of [North] America from his office on Feb. 1, 2010, stating that the IDSA "did not appear to be honoring an agreement to have what he considered to be an impartial, fact-based review of guidelines for Lyme disease practices."  
(watchdogonscience.blogspot.com)

According to an article on the California Lyme Disease Association website, "The four-page Attorney General letter was released in response to a Freedom of Information Request made on behalf of patient groups for information regarding the IDSA's compliance with the Settlement Agreement." (Feb. 3, 2010)

The Attorney General's letter expressed "concern" over "improper voting procedures" used by the IDSA in the Lyme guidelines review voting process. (Connecticutplus.com)

Attorney Lorraine Johnson, executive director of the California Lyme Disease Association, stated, "First, the IDSA stacked the panel by excluding our physicians and now they're stacking the ballot box. The IDSA needs to comply with the settlement agreement and place the interest of patients paramount." (mdjunction.com)

The following are excerpts from a web article on the California Lyme Disease Association site--titled "LYMEPOLICYWONK: IDSA Violates Settlement Agreement Voting Procedures"—which explains clearly how the vote was stacked.  
(lymedisease.org)

"The IDSA used an 'improper voting procedure,' based on a process of its own design, which blatantly violates the Settlement Agreement and undermines the integrity of the voting process.

"The Settlement Agreement requires a two step voting procedure, with each step requiring a supermajority vote (6 of 8 panelists). The first vote asks the question whether each of the contested guideline recommendations is 'medically/scientifically justified in light of all of the evidence and information provided.' This vote requires a supermajority of the panel (6 of 8) in order for a guideline recommendation to stand. In essence, it asks 'did the panel that adopted the 2006 guidelines get it right'?

The second vote, also by supermajority, determines whether the guidelines require no changes, partial revision or complete revision.

"The IDSA's flawed voting procedure combined the two voting steps into one. First, the panel failed to conduct the vote to determine whether the science was sufficient to

support the guideline recommendations. Next, the panel substituted its own procedure for the second step in the voting and required a supermajority for any change.

“This process effectively flipped the supermajority requirement to favor no change to the guidelines.”

*Next: Insurance companies profit from IDSA guidelines*