



Tick check: Early data on 2018 Lyme disease season

By Alison Pereto | June 1, 2018

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last month issued a warning about the increase in diseases from ticks, mosquitoes, and fleas. In the last 13 years, diagnoses of tick-borne diseases alone have more than doubled, including Lyme, Powassan virus, and Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever

So how is this year's tick season shaping up? According to new data from athenahealth researchers, compared to this time last last year, Lyme diagnoses so far are down in five states that usually have high rates.

In analyzing visits to healthcare providers that resulted in a Lyme disease diagnosis across more than 1,600 practices on the athenahealth network, researchers found 13 states experienced a statistically significant decrease in share of visits resulting in Lyme diagnosis in May 2018 as compared to May 2017.

Connecticut experienced the most significant decrease, down 54 percent as compared to the previous year, then Alabama at 40 percent, with New Jersey, Virginia, and Michigan tying for the third-greatest decrease, at 31 percent.

However, many ticks are still in their nymph state, and in past years the Lyme season has peaked in early July. And with ticks moving into states they've never entered before, they're latching on to populations unaware of the "tick check" familiar to residents in the Northeast and other Lyme-active regions.

When will your state reach its peak? Track Lyme diagnoses as the summer unfolds via the athenaInsight 2018 Lyme Disease Dashboard, updated weekly. With data on your side, you can keep yourself and your patients a little safer.

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