

# FINAL BILL REPORT

## SSB 5448

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Synopsis as Enacted

**Brief Description:** Requiring a study of the effects long-term antibiotic therapy has on certain Lyme disease patients.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Health Care (originally sponsored by Senator Hatfield).

**Senate Committee on Health Care**  
**House Committee on Health Care & Wellness**

**Background:** Lyme disease is an inflammatory disease caused by bacteria that are transmitted by ticks. Symptoms usually include fatigue, restless sleep, pain, aching joints, speech problems, or decreased short-term memory. Lyme disease is usually treated over two or three weeks. Commonly prescribed medicine includes doxycycline, amoxicillin, and cefuroxime axetil.

Chronic or persistent Lyme disease occurs if a patient who is treated with antibiotic therapy for the disease continues to experience symptoms. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 10–20 percent of patients who are treated with an antibiotic therapy will have persistent or chronic conditions. Treatment of chronic Lyme disease is often focused on reducing pain and discomfort. Pain relievers are often used to treat joint pain, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications and intra-articular steroids are often used to treat joint swelling.

**Summary:** The Medical Quality Assurance Commission (MQAC) must conduct a study of the effects of long-term antibiotic therapy on patients who have been diagnosed with posttreatment Lyme disease syndrome. The study must include a review of:

- the antibiotics that are commonly involved in long-term treatment of Lyme disease;
- the side effects associated with long-term antibiotic therapy;
- the effectiveness of long-term antibiotic therapy of controlling symptoms;
- whether allowing the practice of long-term antibiotic therapy would be beneficial to the health and safety of Washington residents; and
- any other aspects deemed important for the health and safety of patients who may receive these treatments.

MQAC must report its findings to the Governor and the Legislature by December 1, 2015.

**Votes on Final Passage:**

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Senate 48 0  
House 85 12

**Effective:** July 24, 2015