March 15, 2019

The Honourable Christine Elliott
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Hepburn Block, 10th Floor,
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1E9

Dear Minister Elliott:

On behalf of the members of the Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) we wish to express our concerns for the lack of education, attention and action by health care professionals as it pertains to Lyme Disease.

It has been acknowledged by the Department of Health Canada, by the passing of the Federal Framework on Lyme Disease Act in 2014, that Lyme Disease is a potentially debilitating illness and is a growing threat to Canadians who spend time outdoors. It is also acknowledged that without early and appropriate antibiotic treatment the disease leads to a multi-system breakdown. The numbers of infected ticks are rapidly increasing in the Province of Ontario and it is projected that by 2020 even larger numbers of Ontarians will be exposed to the risk of acquiring Lyme Disease.

We know that the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada has been actively compiling a variety of pamphlets to bring pertinent information to the public. Many Women’s Institute branches across Ontario are also active in having information events in their communities regarding Lyme Disease. There has also been fund raising for the University of Guelph G. Magnotta Foundation lab, which is set up to do research on Lyme Disease, and members donations have enabled FWIO to make a $4,000 donation this past summer.

Unfortunately, there is also an increasing amount of anecdotal evidence that Ontarians who are bit by a tick may not be getting immediate acknowledgment & attention, correct diagnosis and appropriate treatment by local health professionals at clinics and emergency/urgent care locations in Ontario.

FWIO has a 120-year history of supporting families and communities in Ontario. Women’s Institute’s across Ontario remain concerned about the health and wellness of all Canadians.

We are looking for your assurance that the health care professionals under your direction are getting proper education on the impact of Lyme Disease and maintaining an active and diligent response to all incidents of possible tick bites when contacted by Ontarians.
Let's work together to protect Ontarians from Lyme Disease.

Yours for Home & Country,

Linda Zelem
FWIO President

Mary Shortt
Advocacy Committee

cc: Ontario College of Pharmacists
    College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
    College of Nurses of Ontario