A Teen Implores Doctors to Become Educated About Lyme Disease

Nicole Bottles

The following is testimony that Canadian teen Nicole Bottles presented before the British Columbia Legislature on September 17, 2009. Bottles experienced debilitating health problems because of a delayed diagnosis of Lyme disease. She had to spend months in the United States receiving treatment because Lyme disease was not recognized by physicians in Canada, nor was treatment for it covered under the Canadian health-care system. Maintaining that Lyme disease is a serious problem in Canada, Bottles demands that her government become accountable to its ailing Lyme patients and that doctors learn how to properly recognize, diagnose, and treat this infection.

Hello. My name is Nicole Bottles, and I too have Lyme disease.

More than a year ago [in 2008] I was just a typical teenager. In the space of a few short months I was no longer able to walk, remember things, go to school,

Imagine my dismay, that after seeing eight specialists and being tested for what felt like everything, doctors still had no idea what was wrong with me. Even though my mom often brought up Lyme disease, it was quickly discounted. I was ‘too complicated’ to have Lyme disease or so the doctors thought. But they were wrong.

**Lyme-Infected Ticks Are in Canada**

If getting a diagnosis in Canada is hard, it is impossible to get treated. I spent the past year in the United States, getting the drugs and care that I should have been able to obtain here. I wish my case was ‘one-of-a-kind’ and rare, but there are far too many people sick with Lyme disease now for health agencies and government to still believe this myth; that Lyme disease does not exist in Canada. I am angry, and you should be too. Lyme disease is no longer just an East Coast problem. It isn’t just in the United States. Ticks don’t wait in long lines with their passports to cross the border. Lyme infected ticks exist in B.C. [British Columbia] and across Canada, and to suggest otherwise is just avoiding a widely known and accepted truth. Lyme infected ticks are no longer just a thing in off-road parks, deep in the forest. They are in your gardens, on your pets, and your city sidewalks. Even on Parliament Hill you could find them!

So, politicians, it is time that you begin to ask why nothing is being done, and it is time to act. We need your help. In our own country, with our universal health care, why are we being left behind? Forgive me for sounding like a child, but why aren’t you, the doctors, the CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention], the College of Physicians and Surgeons, politicians not doing more? Don’t you care? If I was your child, niece or sister, would you let me...