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July 14, 2016

Senator Stanley Rosenberg
Senate President
State House, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

Robert DeLeo
Speaker of the House
State House, 356
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senate President Rosenberg, Speaker DeLeo and Members of the Legislature:

RE: FY'17 Budget - Governor Baker's amended language on Lyme Disease Treatment

On behalf of Atrius Health I am writing to ask that you support Governor Charlie Baker's amended budget language for FY'17 related to Lyme disease (Sections 108,111,113, 115).

Atrius Health, an innovative nonprofit healthcare leader, delivers an effective system of connected care for more than 675,000 adult and pediatric patients in eastern and central Massachusetts. Atrius Health's 29 medical practices, with more than 35 specialties and approximately 1300 eligible clinicians, work together with the home health and hospice services of its VNA Care Network Foundation subsidiary and in close collaboration with hospital partners, community specialists and skilled nursing facilities. Atrius Health provides high-quality, patient-centered, coordinated care to every patient it serves. By establishing a solid foundation of knowledge, understanding and trust with each of its patients, Atrius Health enriches their health and enhances their lives.

As the head of the Atrius Health infectious disease specialty and an infectious disease specialist who treats many patients within our practice, I am strongly opposed to mandating coverage for Lyme disease with long-term antibiotic therapies that are not clinically recognized as an appropriate form of treatment. Furthermore, this off-label practice is expensive and ill-advised and there is clear evidence of lack of benefit from well-performed clinical trials and a lack of evidence of any benefit.

As a health care leader in Massachusetts that strives for the highest quality care for the patients for whom we care and as good stewards of limited healthcare dollars, Atrius Health believes that Governor Baker's amended language strikes the right balance related to the treatment of Lyme Disease.

Thank you again for your consideration. Should you have additional questions please feel free to contact me at (617) 629-6421 or Kathy Keough, Director of Government Relations at (617) 559-8561.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benjamin A. Kruskal".

Benjamin A. Kruskal, MD, PhD, FAAP, FIDSA
Chief of Infectious Disease and Travel Medicine, Atrius Health