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**Health Department Awarded Funding to Study Lyme disease**

**Eau Claire, WI, October 10th, 2017** – The Eau Claire City-County Health Department was recently awarded \$10,000 from the Wisconsin Division of Public Health to study how common Lyme disease is in the ticks we find in our local parks. The Health Department will share these results, as well as ways community members can prevent Lyme disease via social media, signage and programming at popular outdoor locations, and at events throughout the year.

The number of cases of Lyme disease in Eau Claire County is on the rise, almost doubling from 2014 to 2015. In 2014, 24 cases were reported, compared to 45 cases in 2015. In 2016, 54 cases were reported. Lyme disease has historically been the second most prevalent reportable communicable disease in Eau Claire County.



In 2014, the Health Department began a tick collection project at two rural county parks to determine the percentage of ticks infected with Lyme disease. Over time, results showed an average infection rate among collected ticks of over 40%!

“Lyme disease is here. It’s in our backyards, our parks, our trails...and we need to talk about how to prevent it,” says KT Gallagher, Environmental Health Supervisor.

This funding will allow the department to begin collecting ticks in two additional urban Eau Claire parks so they can get a better picture of the overall prevalence of Lyme disease. Community partners will work with the Health Department on this project to increase awareness of Lyme disease and how to prevent it. “As a result of this project, we hope to see less of our residents affected by Lyme Disease because they are aware of how common it is in our community, and how they can prevent it,” Gallagher states.

The project in Eau Claire County is one of eight environmental public health projects being funded throughout the state through the *Taking Action with Data* funding opportunity from the [Wisconsin Environmental Public Health Tracking Program](#), which is housed at the Wisconsin Division of Public Health.

For more information about Tick-borne diseases, please visit our website at: <http://www.ci.eau-claire.wi.us/departments/health-department/communicable-disease/tick-borne-disease> or contact us at 715-839-4718.

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