AN ACT Relating to the treatment of Lyme disease; adding a new section to chapter 69.41 RCW; and creating a new section.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. (1) The legislature finds that:
(a) Since 2000, there have been over two hundred sixty confirmed cases of Lyme disease in Washington state.
(b) Lyme disease is debilitating to those for whom initial antibiotic treatment is not effective, and in many cases results in severe joint pain, memory problems, heart conditions, and the inability to move one or both sides of the face.
(c) Many of the individuals suffering from Lyme disease require long-term antibiotic therapy to control symptoms, but doctors are reluctant to provide this therapy due to lack of education in Washington state.
(d) Credible long-term therapies have been documented by professional organizations such as the international Lyme and associated diseases society.
(e) Many patients who receive these credible treatments for posttreatment of Lyme disease experience relief from their symptoms, dramatically improving their quality of life.
Therefore, the legislature intends to increase the options for the treatment of Lyme disease by authorizing medical professionals to prescribe, administer, or dispense long-term antibiotic therapies to patients suffering from Lyme disease.

**NEW SECTION. Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 69.41 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A physician licensed under chapter 18.71 RCW, an osteopathic physician licensed under chapter 18.57 RCW, an advanced registered nurse practitioner licensed under chapter 18.79 RCW, a physician assistant licensed under chapter 18.71A RCW, or an osteopathic physician assistant licensed under chapter 18.57A RCW may prescribe, administer, or dispense long-term antibiotic therapy to a patient who has been diagnosed with Lyme disease. The long-term antibiotic therapy must be for a therapeutic purpose that eliminates infections or controls the patient's symptoms related to the patient's diagnosis with Lyme disease.

(2) A health care provider acting in compliance with subsection (1) of this section is not subject to professional disciplinary action under chapter 18.130 RCW based solely upon the health care provider's prescribing, administering, or dispensing of long-term antibiotic therapy to a patient who has been diagnosed with Lyme disease.

(3) For the purposes of this section, the term "long-term antibiotic therapy" means the administration of oral, intramuscular, or intravenous antibiotics, singly or in combination, for periods of time in excess of four weeks.

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