

## First-ever Lyme tick test is developed in the Poconos

### Is that tick infected? Kits developed at ESU are ready to answer that perennial question

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From left: State Senator and member of ESU's Council of Trustees, Mario Scavello; Forensic Scientist at the Northeast Wildlife DNA Laboratory at ESU, Nicole Chinnici; ESU President, Marcia G. Welsh, Ph.D.; President and CEO of EPA Enterprises, Inc. and member of ESU's Council of Trustees, Edward P. Abraham (Photo provided)



The Cutter Lyme Disease Tick Test is available in two different packages

In the Pocono Mountains, checking for ticks after spending time outdoors is critical. Pennsylvania leads the nation in cases of Lyme disease, the most common vector borne infection in the United States.

With the support of EPA Enterprises, East Stroudsburg University (ESU) will make the detection of Lyme disease easier and faster for people and their pets. Early detection of Lyme disease is critical to a good recovery, says Nicole Chinnici, forensic scientist at the Northeast Wildlife DNA Laboratory at ESU.

On July 20, East Stroudsburg University and EPA Enterprises launched the Cutter Lyme Disease Tick Test, the first nationally recognized brand name product developed at ESU. They tout fast, 99.9 percent accurate DNA test results determining if a tick carries Lyme disease.

“We have received ticks from 22 states, Canada and Central America,” said Chinnici. “I expect those numbers to increase as people begin to realize how accessible these kits have become.”

The kits may be purchased online at [cutterticktest.com](http://cutterticktest.com) for \$24.99, and will be available in stores in the near future. This cost includes all laboratory testing fees.

The kit includes a tick remover, alcohol wipe, specimen bag, labels, a test submission form, and a pre-addressed mailing label.

"Its simplicity makes the kit a great tool to keep in your medicine cabinet, backpack or car," said Chinnici.

The tick, once removed from the bite victim, whether human or pet, is mailed to ESU's Northeast Wildlife DNA Laboratory, where it is tested for Lyme disease. Results are delivered within three business days via email, phone, or mail.

Award money funds research. The original tick test kit concept was developed by an ESU student and professor in 2010 as a submission to ESU's Student Business Plan Competition. At that time, ESU student Melissa Shaw and Dr. Jane Huffman, distinguished professor of biology, were researching ticks and their relationship to Lyme disease in northeastern Pennsylvania. Together, they developed a business plan for Lyme-Aid, an earlier version of the tick test, and Shaw won first place. Winnings from the competition were invested in the prototype of Lyme-Aid. A year later, Shaw and Huffman received an additional grant to support the commercialization of Lyme-Aid.

In 2012, ESU commercialized Lyme-Aid with the signing of a non-exclusive license agreement with Garrett Hewitt International — the very first commercialization of a student/faculty initiative at ESU and within the State System of Higher Education.

In 2014, EPA Enterprises assumed the responsibility of manufacturing, distribution, and marketing of the kit. This included a licensing agreement with United Industries Corporation enabling the use of the Cutter brand name.

For more information about the East Stroudsburg University Wildlife DNA Laboratory visit [esu.edu/dnalab](http://esu.edu/dnalab) or call 570-422-7892.