

Testimony of Jeanette Schultz
In Opposition to SB 1128
An Act Concerning Influenza Immunization for Health Care Employees

Public Health Committee
March 20, 2013

I wish to thank the Public Health Committee for allowing me to testify.

My name is Jeanette Schultz and I am a Registered Nurse currently completing my Graduate Degree in Nursing at Sacred Heart University. In 2009, I received the flu vaccination offered by my employer as I had done every year before since joining the healthcare industry in 2005. I never had a problem with getting the shot because I knew it was a preventative measure to reduce my risk of getting the flu and preventing me from spreading it to others. However, within 4 days of obtaining the flu shot, I noticed increased sensitivity and tingling in my hands and feet. It lasted approximately four days and then resolved. Since then I haven't received the flu shot. Fortunately for me, I was one of the lucky ones whose employer did not mandate it and I choose to wear a surgical mask along with universal precautions to prevent obtaining the virus or transmitting it. However, I noticed that after my 12 hour shift, I would leave the hospital with a sore throat. On February 2, 2013 I completed my last shift due to an education leave to finish my Graduate program and I will return on April 1, 2013 and at that point that I enter the building I will be wearing a surgical mask.

According to the CDC, the flu shot is 60% effective at preventing influenza and the CDC states on their website that the flu shot does not work for everyone. The purpose of the flu shot is to illicit an immune response so the body can create antibodies to the virus and in the event the individual is exposed to the virus, does not become infected unless of course you are one of the 40% of individuals who become infected anyway! Furthermore, the flu shot affects the immune function for a period of time making people susceptible to other viruses and infections.

I have heard countless stories of individuals who report that they received the flu shot and then got sick and aside from myself, I can speak of two other stories as well. Two healthcare workers reported getting the flu shot due to the requirement of the healthcare organization. Once they got the flu shot, one ended up hospitalized and the other developed vertigo. Fortunately for me, my symptoms did not progress to something like a Guillain-Barre Syndrome. After speaking with my physician about my symptoms, I was advised not to get the flu shot.

In other healthcare organizations in the United States and here in Connecticut, healthcare workers have lost their jobs over this very issue. Had my organization not provided the option to "opt-op" and wear a surgical mask; I may have been one of those healthcare workers who lost my job as well. However, I do not know what may have happened to my health if I had to constantly submit myself to wearing a surgical mask given that I was always leaving work with a sore throat.

Equally important to mention is the lack of responsibility that the healthcare organization is willing to accept. When you are given the flu shot, employers require that the employees sign a waiver when the flu shots are given, alleviating them of any responsibility for their employees' health that could result from the vaccination. This is one of the many reasons why I feel mandating the flu shot for anyone, young, old or in the case of healthcare workers is unjust and against our constitutional rights as American citizens. No one should be allowed to impose a flu shot as collateral for a paycheck. Mandating a flu shot would mean that for me and many others. God forbid this senate bill pass, because if that happens, I would have to go against my doctor's advice, receive a flu shot and then risk developing Guillain-Barre Syndrome. Which one of you will tell my daughters why their mother is laying in an ICU with a tube down her throat and tubes all around her?

Mandating a vaccine that is only 60% effective is incomprehensible. There are side effects to everything that is put into our bodies. By mandating the flu vaccine is the same as telling a diabetic patient that they must take metformin to assist in managing their diabetes despite the fact that they have poor renal function, developed side effects such as lactic acidosis or gastrointestinal upset. People's health has been affected because of the flu shot and jobs have been lost over the flu shot. The flu shot has prevented the flu for many but it has also failed many others as well! It is not 100% effective and it comes with side effects! The most effective way to prevent any virus is to maintain one's health by proper diet and exercise and universal precautions!

Please oppose SB 1128. Thank you.

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