

2/26/2007

sanofi pasteur

The vaccines business of sanofi-aventis Group

Chairwoman Handley, Chairwoman Sayers, Members of the Environment Committee -

Sanofi pasteur respectfully opposes Proposed Bill 5512 that would require the Department of Health to establish a bulk purchasing program for influenza vaccine that would allow physicians to purchase the vaccine through the Health Department.

Sanofi pasteur is a major manufacturer of injectable influenza vaccine in the United States, this year providing more than 50 million doses of vaccine to the US market. We share goals that are common to all stakeholders involved in the influenza marketplace: raising immunization rates and improving access to vaccine. We also believe that a viable competitive marketplace is key to attracting and maintaining manufacturers to assure an adequate supply of vaccine.

While there have been challenges regarding an adequate supply in the past few years, this year there have been more doses of influenza vaccine available in the United States than ever before. It is now projected that in the 2007-2008 season there may be as many as 130 million doses available. The establishment of a bulk purchasing program that would place all purchasing decisions in the hands of one entity would prove to be anti-competitive and serve as a disincentive for manufacturers to enter and remain in the influenza marketplace.

Rather than focusing on purchasing issues and shipping priorities, an expanded educational initiative is needed to help utilize the large number of influenza vaccine doses that are now available and will be available in the future. Influenza immunization rates in the US are unacceptably low. Efforts need to be made to motivate and assist providers in educating their patients regarding the recommendations surrounding influenza immunizations. Additionally, educational campaigns directed to the public would also prove helpful in explaining the value of being immunized against influenza. These educational efforts will prove to be far more valuable to the health of the citizens of Connecticut than will efforts to bulk purchase influenza vaccine doses.

Sincerely,

Phil Hosbach
VP Immunization Policy and Government Relations