

Testimony of Joanne Chapin, President
New Milford Nurses, AFT Connecticut Local 5101

In Opposition to SB 1128
***An Act Concerning Influenza Immunizations
For Health Care Employees***
Public Health
March 20, 2013

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Good afternoon, Representative Susan Johnson, Senator Terry Gerratana and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Joanne Chapin and I am a staff nurse and President of the New Milford RNs. This year, working in conjunction with the Danbury Nurses Union, we negotiated an influenza immunization program with Western CT Healthcare Network. This program did not include mandatory immunization, but was centered on mandatory participation.

Every employee in the Network was required to either receive the influenza vaccine or fill out a form declining. If the employee chose to decline, they were required to wear a mask if within 3 feet of a patient. The nurses unions encouraged this program through social media, emails and newsletters and in Danbury, helped to administer the vaccine.

The results were astonishing. In New Milford, we had a 100% participation rate with 93% being vaccinated and only 7% declining. In Danbury, we reached our goal of 90% vaccination rate.

This demonstrates how the cooperation between labor and management and a well organized campaign can be a success. A mandatory program would be very hard pressed to reach the 90% mark.

We are very proud of the success of our influenza vaccination campaign and I believe that it should be used as a state model for any further action.

I ask that you not support SB 1128.

Thank you.

