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Public Health Committee  
March 20, 2013  
Testimony in Support of S.B. 1128  
AN ACT CONCERNING INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE EMPLOYEES.  
Submitted by AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of more than 37 million, nearly 600,000 of whom live right here in Connecticut, which helps people age 50 and up turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, caregiving, employment security and retirement planning.

We believe governments should work together to develop, fund, implement, and evaluate strategies to improve and protect the public's health. That includes improving quality outcomes throughout our health and long-term care system.

In 2010, AARP in partnership with The Scan Foundation and The Commonwealth Fund released a multidimensional *Scorecard* to measure state-level performance of long-term services and supports for older adults and people with disabilities. The *Scorecard* identified hospital admissions and readmissions rates to be a critical quality indicator. Nationally, twenty-one percent (21%) of long-stay nursing home residents were admitted to the hospital within six months of assessment. Based on 2008 data, nearly nineteen percent (18.7%) of long-stay nursing home residents in our state had a hospital admission, ranking Connecticut 23<sup>rd</sup> in the country on this quality indicator.

To improve this quality measure, AARP supports timely and effective preventative services and early treatment of acute conditions. S.B. 1128 would improve the health for direct care workers in nursing homes, help protect residents from the flu and thereby minimize flu-related hospitalizations. Specifically, the proposal seeks to ensure that each direct care workers in hospitals, nursing home facilities and emergency service organizations are immunized against influenza in accordance with National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations.

AARP supports the Committee work to improve preventative services that can help reduce unnecessary hospitalizations, particularly among vulnerable individuals residing in nursing home facilities. This should result in better health outcomes and a more cost-effective health care system.

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