



## Real Possibilities

Testimony of AARP Connecticut  
S.B. # 257: AAC Hepatitis C Testing  
March 14, 2014  
Public Health Committee

AARP is a nonpartisan social mission organization with an age 50+ membership of nearly 37 million nationwide, and over 602,000 here in Connecticut. We are dedicated to the health and well-being of our members and the 50+ population generally. That's why we support legislation requiring that primary care providers offer Hepatitis C screening for "Baby Boomers" based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control.

S.B. 257 will require individuals born between 1945 and 1965 to be offered a Hepatitis C screening test when receiving primary health care services from a provider in most circumstances. Hepatitis C is a contagious liver disease that ranges in severity from a mild illness lasting a few weeks to a serious, lifelong illness that attacks the liver, leading to serious liver problems, including cirrhosis (scarring of the liver) or liver cancer.

In August 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) called for such testing after finding "Baby Boomers" are at risk for Hepatitis C infection. Those baby boomers accounted for 75 percent of the estimated 3.2 million Americans infected with Hepatitis C, according to the CDC.

There have been great advances over the past few years in treatments for Hepatitis C and many can be cured. By increasing testing opportunities, S.B. 257 will ensure that more individuals living with Hepatitis C can become aware of their infection status, get available treatment, and take steps to prevent transmission.

Empowering individuals to know their infection status is an important step toward meeting the public health challenges presented by this contagious and communicable disease. Testing is a crucial factor in disease prevention since many people infected with Hepatitis C show no symptoms.

AARP applauds the Public Health Committee for raising legislation to expand access to Hepatitis C testing and we urge support for S.B. 257. Thank you.