



**Connecticut Department of Public Health**

**Testimony Presented Before the Committee on Public Health  
March 18, 2015**

**Commissioner Jewel Mullen, MD, MPH, MPA  
860-509-7101**

**House Bill # 6949 An Act Concerning Childhood Vaccinations.**

The Department of Public Health supports the intent of House Bill 6949, which is to strengthen the statutory language concerning religious exemptions to immunization requirements.

Currently in Connecticut, to claim a religious exemption on the basis that the immunization would be contrary to the religious beliefs of the child, the parents or guardians complete the following statement and return it to the school or child care facility:

I/we hereby assert that the immunization of this student would be contrary to the religious beliefs of this child. Therefore, this child shall be exempt from the required immunizations under Section 10-204a of the Connecticut General Statutes and shall be permitted to attend a licensed child care program or school except in the case of a vaccine-preventable disease outbreak.

Should this bill move forward, the DPH will update the certificate of religious exemption available on the Department's web site (<http://www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3136&q=388416>) to include a section for notarization similar to New Hampshire's certificate: (<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/immunization/documents/exemption.pdf>).

Language in lines 28 and 29 and lines 77 to 79 mandates the Commissioner of Public Health to waive the notarization requirement if a request is made by a parent or guardian. Currently a request for exemption, which describes the reasons for seeking the exemption, is provided directly to the school or child care facility to be maintained as part of the student's health assessment record. Therefore, the Department recommends that notarization requirement waiver requests be made to the entity that is maintaining the documentation.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's view on this bill.