

Illinois State Medical Society



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Illinois General Assembly

FROM: James E. Tierney, Vice President
Kimberly B. Janas, Assistant Vice President
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RE: Vote No on any Motion to Override the Veto of SB 661

We urge you to oppose any effort to override the veto of Senate Bill 661, which requires physicians and other health care professionals providing primary care to offer Hepatitis C screening to all persons born between 1945 and 1965 if providing a "comprehensive physical examination" regardless of setting. Additionally, SB 661 requires all physicians and other professionals to offer a Hepatitis C screen to all persons born between 1945 and 1965 when performing a physical examination in any setting where blood is drawn for testing. While this mandate is based on guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), turning guidelines into a mandate is bad policy.

Recommendations and guidelines are *not* put forth to be codified into law. There are over 7,500 clinical practice guidelines issued by various government agencies or physician specialty societies. **Guidelines are intended to provide physicians with clinical tools to diagnose and treat disease. They are not intended as mandates to be enacted into law.**

This bill chips away at a physician's ability to provide patient-centered care with a mandate that fails to consider the needs of the individual patient. Further, as stated in the veto message, the bill "fails to address the important question of how to pay for the expensive treatment necessary to treat the disease. It is an untenable position to diagnose a disease but not account for funding for the treatment." ISMS agrees that ensuring access to expensive treatment has to be addressed.

ISMS and other physician specialty groups have been educating physicians about these guidelines. By every measure, more physicians are screening for Hepatitis C, with more and more patients being screened for and diagnosed with Hepatitis C.

Since the CDC guidelines were issued in August of 2012, reported cases of Hepatitis C in Illinois have increased significantly. Data obtained from the Illinois Department of Public Health show a 29 percent increase in reported cases from 2013 to 2014. Additionally, a new report from the IMS Institute for Healthcare Informatics found the number of patients treated for Hepatitis C increased tenfold over the same period.

ISMS will continue to work with all of the stakeholders to improve education and access to not only screening, but to the extremely expensive treatments as well.

We respectfully urge you to vote "NO" on any motion to override the veto of Senate Bill 661.