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The Honorable Bruce Rauner  
Governor, State of Illinois  
State Capitol Room 207  
Springfield, IL 62706

July 24, 2015

Dear Governor Rauner:

On behalf of the Illinois Academy of Family Physicians, I urge you to veto Senate Bill 661, creating the Hepatitis C Screening Act.

This mandate is based upon guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). While guidelines are intended to provide physicians with clinical tools to diagnose and treat disease, they are not intended to become mandates enacted into law. In fact, former USPSTF member Barbara Yawn, MD stated: *"The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force is an independent panel of experts in primary care and prevention who systematically reviews the evidence of effectiveness and develops recommendations for clinical preventive services. The USPSTF recommendation statements present health care providers with information about the evidence behind each recommendation, allowing clinicians to make informed decisions about implementation. **The intent of these recommendations is guidance, not to be construed as mandated by law.**"*

Undeniably, family physicians believe in the appropriateness of the Hepatitis C guidelines and recognize the disease as a public health issue. To that end, reported cases increased by 29% from 2013 to 2014 and over 36,000 cases of Hepatitis C have been reported to IDPH in the last five years. This could not have happened without an increase in screening/testing by physicians and other health professionals.

Senate Bill 661 sets dangerous legislative precedent. Clinical guidelines frequently change as new technology, pharmaceuticals, and treatments are discovered and implemented into the practice of medicine. Medicine must remain responsive as new evidence leads to changing recommendations and new treatment options emerge. Legislatively mandated screenings are not always the best course of action to address public health concerns. These mandates are very hard to change once put into place and may actually hamper the attempt to improve public health in the future.

Please veto Senate Bill 661.

Respectfully,

Janet Albers, M.D.