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TO: Representative Erik Severson, Chair and Members of the Assembly Health Committee  
FROM: Gina Dennik-Champion, MSN, RN, MSHA  
Wisconsin Nurses Association Executive Director  
Date: November 13, 2013  
RE: Opposition to AB 247 – Prohibition on employer requiring influenza vaccination of employees

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The Wisconsin Nurses Association (WNA) appreciates the opportunity to submit testimony on AB 247 which addresses the limitations on requiring and requesting vaccination against influenza. As WNA reviewed this legislative proposal we find that the inclusion of employees who provide care to clinically compromised individuals is worrisome and has a degree of risk.

WNA believes that although the employer retains the authority to remove an employee showing signs and symptoms of being infected with the influenza virus that will not prevent patient exposure to the virus. The Center for Disease Control reports that individuals are infectious one day before symptoms occur and 5 – 7 days thereafter. Trying to differentiate between a “common cold” and the influenza virus during the first few days creates risk to the vulnerable patient. Employer awareness that an unvaccinated health care provider can transmit the influenza virus and cause harm to their compromised patient, nursing home resident, home care client or children in the school setting prior to symptomatology or shortly thereafter is a known risk that can be prevented.

It is for this reason that WNA opposes AB 247.

Thank you Chairperson Severson for holding this hearing on AB 247. Please feel free to contact me if you or your Committee members have any questions.