



March 26, 2018

Dear Chair Dean and Committee Members:

I am the Chief Executive Officer of ClearWay Minnesota, an independent nonprofit that works to reduce tobacco's harm in our state. **I am writing to express our support for HF2962 – as long as the tobacco cessation medications that pharmacists are allowed to prescribe are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of tobacco dependence.**

Since 2001, ClearWay Minnesota has operated QUITPLAN® Services. These are effective, science-based programs that give Minnesota tobacco users free tools to quit. QUITPLAN Services includes phone counseling, medications, emails, text messaging and other self-help materials.

The devastating harms of tobacco addiction are well documented. For elected leaders such as yourselves, the question is not "What does smoking do?" but "What can we do to stop it?" **One of the fundamental ways we can reduce the burden of tobacco addiction is by expanding access to evidence-based quit-smoking support across Minnesota.**

Tobacco use remains the single most preventable cause of death and disease. When used as designed, tobacco products kill more than half their users. Tobacco takes a devastating toll on our health, communities and businesses. More than 6,300 Minnesotans die each year from tobacco use and tobacco use costs our state more than \$7 billion annually in health care costs and lost productivity.

Many of our friends, neighbors and family members still use tobacco and need help quitting. An estimated 580,000 adults in Minnesota still smoke and the majority want to quit. ClearWay Minnesota has long supported innovative and effective ways to increase access to tobacco cessation services. Our state can save lives and money by making it easier for Minnesotans to quit commercial tobacco.

Fortunately, counseling and medication support can more than triple the chances of a person successfully quitting. **Pharmacists are key members of care delivery teams and are trusted health care providers for many Minnesotans. This is especially true in rural Minnesota and within populations heavily targeted by the tobacco industry.**

Helping addicted tobacco users quit doesn't just prevent future disease and death, it also reduces excess medical costs, which are an enormous burden on individuals, families and taxpayers. I hope the Health and Human Services Finance Committee will pass this bill to improve access to quit-smoking help in our state. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David J. Willoughby".

David J. Willoughby, M.A.
Chief Executive Officer
ClearWay MinnesotaSM