

To Whom it May Concern:

Minnesota is in the midst of an overdose crisis. Since 2010, there has been a 327 percent increase in opioid-related deaths. There are HIV outbreaks in Hennepin, Ramsey, and Saint Louis counties, as well as steady increases in Hepatitis C cases.

We partner with a large collective of harm reduction organizations, syringe service providers, state government entities, Minnesota medical professionals, hospital systems, substance use treatment providers, and people with lived experience. Together, we scripted HF2041, a bill to expand access to our syringe services providers and our frontline harm reduction and substance experts so those who use substances can seek wellness, security, and recovery in our great state.

HF2041:

- Provides legal protections for our harm reduction health workers and organizations
- Expands drug testing to allow for broader drug checking capabilities beyond singular and outdated modalities
- Allows pharmacists discretion to dispense syringes in a quantity that meets the needs of their local Minnesota communities.
- Decriminalizes drug paraphernalia and contained residues and expands protections for those who use syringe service programs.

What we know:

- Those who visit a syringe service provider are five times more likely to enter chemical dependency treatment than those who do not.
- Syringe service providers help reduce infectious disease by 50 percent.
- There is no evidence showing that paraphernalia laws deter illicit drug use; rather, they reduce access to safe use supplies and contribute to the spread of infectious diseases.
- Paraphernalia laws help contribute to the spread of infectious diseases and can prevent people who use drugs from using tools and services that reduce overdose risk.
- Paraphernalia law enforcement disproportionately targets and harms people of color.
- SSP's drastically reduce needlestick injuries among uniformed officers and first responders and DO NOT increase crime in communities that have them.
- 30 years of research has shown that comprehensive SSPs are safe, effective, and cost saving, do not increase illegal drug use or crime, and play an important role in reducing the transmission of viral hepatitis, HIV, and other infections.

Please support HF2041.

Sincerely,

Steve Rummler HOPE Network

*The mission of the Steve Rummler HOPE Network is to heighten awareness of the opioid crisis, address its impact on the physical and emotional burdens of addiction and chronic pain, and improve the associated care processes.*