

May 1, 2023

Representative Kelly Moller, Chair
Public Safety Finance and Policy
Committee
Minnesota House of Representatives
479 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Senator Ron Latz, Chair
Judiciary and Public Safety
Committee
Minnesota State Senate
3105 Minnesota Senate Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Moller and Chair Latz:

Thank you for the opportunity allowing the Mark Nupen MD to weigh-in on specific legislation included in the House and Senate versions of the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bills, SF2909. As a physician this bill will literally help save lives and prevent illnesses associated with our illegal drug laws. Time for change and this bill will help promote better health for those impaired by drug addiction. Drug addiction is a Health Problem, NOT a criminal problem.

House version of the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bill includes HF2041 (Gomez)/SF2261 (Oumou Verbeten), a bill that authorizes syringe services to possess, distribute, and dispose of syringes; authorizes the hypodermic syringes and changes to the statute related to drug paraphernalia (See House version, Article 16, Sections 1-6 and 13-15).

We are pleased to see HF2041's language included in the Omnibus Judiciary and Public Safety Finance bill as drug paraphernalia policy should be focused on saving lives and reducing the risks of overdose.

History has shown that harsh penalties for drug use and paraphernalia does nothing to help people and only worsens the tragic overdose crisis. Tougher laws and sentences around drug paraphernalia results in more death, avoidable diseases, and creates greater risks when

individuals seek drugs and drug paraphernalia in the illicit market, particularly impacting low- income people and communities of color. These drug paraphernalia laws also threaten to punish nonusers involved in harm reduction activities.

The legislation, as it now stands, allows Minnesota to move forward with allowing syringe services providers to operate under and within defined parameters as well as decriminalizing drug paraphernalia and residues contained therein. These changes will undoubtedly reduce harm and save lives of Minnesotans and we. urge the conference committee members to support the inclusion of HF2041..

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the conference committee.

Sincerely,

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C: Rep. Jamie Becker-Finn
Rep. Sandra Feist
Rep. Cedrick Frazier
Rep. Brion Curran
Sen. Clare Oumou Verbeten
Sen. Sandra Pappas
Sen. Judy Seeberger
Sen. Bonnie Westlin