



Written Testimony for the Conference Committee on HF100/SF73 - Cannabis Omnibus
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**HF 100 / SF 73 URGING MINNESOTA LEGISLATORS TO FUND THE U OF M
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH WHEN LEGALIZING CANNABIS**

Chairs Representative Stephenson and Senator Port and members of the committee:

On behalf of the University of Minnesota School of Public Health (SPH), I appreciate the opportunity to submit this written testimony for the record for the May 12, 2023 Conference Committee meeting on HF100/SF73 - Cannabis Omnibus.

With this testimony, SPH requests a \$2.5 million annual appropriation from the taxation of cannabis to establish a new Center for Cannabis Research. If this bill is passed and adult-use cannabis is legalized, creating a strong public health research infrastructure from the start is vital to understanding how cannabis is used, its impact on health, and how different Minnesota populations and communities are affected. The new center would study these questions as well as other costs and benefits of legalizing adult-use marijuana from a public health perspective.

Public health research funding is not prioritized in the House version of the bill. Current language includes research allocations for the cannabis and hemp consumer industries, clinical trials related to medical cannabis use and THC therapeutics, and cannabis genetics and agronomy research. ***It is critical that public health also be prioritized in research allocations.*** If cannabis becomes legal in Minnesota, policymakers will need access to up-to-date data and evidence to make informed decisions about population health.

SPH is the best place to establish a center for cannabis research. The school has the infrastructure in place to begin investigating cannabis and its use immediately. In addition, SPH has a long history of policy modeling, analysis, and evaluation related to substance use and a strong track record of collaboration with agencies, organizations, and policy makers.

Minnesota has a chance to get cannabis legalization right from the start by providing funding now to track the health impacts of adult-use marijuana and its effects.

Sincerely,

Timothy Beebe, PhD
Interim Dean and Mayo Professor
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