

May 8, 2025

Senator Omar Fateh
Representative Marion Rarick
Representative Dan Wolgamott

Re: HF 2431: Higher education policy and finance bill

Dear Chair Fateh, Co-Chair Rarick, Co-Chair Wolgamott and Members of the Higher Education Conference Committee:

On behalf of the City of Minneapolis, we strongly urge you to **not** eliminate funding for cannabis research in the Higher Education budget.

The Minneapolis Health Department relies on the UMN Cannabis Research Center (CRC) to provide data and research about the public health implications of cannabis legalization for recreational use. Given that cannabis is not legal for use at the federal level, there is very little research on the health implications of cannabis use. The CRC provides a trusted source of this crucial information.

Specifically, we have used the CRC's study on youth access to low potency hemp THC products in Minneapolis. This research found that Pseudo-underage buyers (buyers who were over 21 but looked younger) were able to purchase hemp-derived THC products in over 55% of the purchase attempts in Minneapolis. IDs were not requested by the establishments that sold. This study highlights the need for instituting effective education and a strong compliance check program in our City.

In addition, the CRC is a valued partner for not only our health department, but local public health departments across the state. The Center recently surveyed all local public health departments to better understand what our needs are as we work on preventing cannabis use among youth and pregnant women.

We want to stress that without state funding for cannabis research at the University of Minnesota, there will be a great reduction in scientific research on the health and safety effects of cannabis and legalization of cannabis in Minnesota. Neither local public health departments nor the Minnesota Health Department has capacity to conduct this kind of research, data synthesis and sharing of results.

In closing, the Minneapolis Health Department relies on the Center to provide Cannabis related prevention related information based on solid research.

Sincerely,



Heidi Ritchie
Deputy Commissioner of Health
City of Minneapolis