

Testimony of Maria K. Poirier M.D. regarding need for cannabis education programs for adults  
May 15, 2023

Rep. Stephenson, Sen. Port, and members of the H.F. 100 Conference Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit written testimony for amendment recommendations to the cannabis bill. My name is Maria Poirier, and I am an internal medicine physician from Rochester. I am submitting these amendment requests on behalf of my adult patients who often believe that if marijuana is legal, then it must be safe for consumption. The current revision of the cannabis bill does not contain education programs for adults or funding for adult education outside of substance use disorder and pregnancy. I recommend adding adult education to the section on cannabis education programs and appropriations.

Recent studies have shown a rising trend of adult cannabis users under the age of 50 suffering from heart attack and stroke. Prevention of these devastating events is paramount as mortality is high and morbidity is incredibly expensive. Funding for the education of youth *and adults* regarding the risks of cannabis use will save lives.

According to data from the Minnesota Dept. of Health, adults who use cannabis had a record increase in hospital treated cannabis poisoning Q3 2022 following the legalization of hemp-derived THC edibles July 2022. The state of California recorded a 1804% relative increase in cannabis -related emergency room visits by seniors from 2005-2019.

Education of clinicians and the public regarding the risks of cannabis use is recommended by the American Heart Association.

2020 American Heart Association Scientific Statement (in part):

“Meanwhile, the negative health implications of cannabis should be formally and consistently emphasized in policy, including a doubling down on the American Heart Association’s commitment to limiting the smoking and vaping of any products and banning cannabis use for youth. All clinicians (physicians, advanced practice providers, nurses, pharmacists, and others) need greater exposure to and education on the various cannabis products and their health implications during their initial training and continuing education, and they must be alert to the possibility that the use of cannabis or its potent synthetic analogs might be the underlying cause of severe cardiovascular events and pathologies. The public needs high-quality information about cannabis, which can help counterbalance the proliferation of rumor and false claims about the health effects of cannabis products.”

### Amendment Recommendations

Article 6 Misc. Provisions, Page R11

219.21 14. [144.197]CANNABIS EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

219.22 Subdivision 1. Youth and adult education. The commissioner of health, in collaboration with  
219.23 local health departments, shall conduct a long-term, coordinated education program to raise  
219.24 public awareness about and address the top three adverse health effects  
219.25 as determined by the commissioner in consultation with professional medical organizations  
219.26 associated with the use of cannabis flower or cannabis products by youth  
219.27 and adults. In conducting this education program, the commissioner shall engage and  
219.28 consult with youth, young adults, seniors, and professional medical organizations around the  
219.29 state on program content and on methods to effectively disseminate program information to  
219.30 youth and adults around the state.

Article 9 Appropriations, page R5

294.17 (e) Of the amount appropriated under paragraph (a), \$..... in fiscal year 2024 and \$.....  
294.18 in fiscal year 2025 are for education for youth and adults. Of this amount, \$..... each year is for  
294.19 statewide youth and adult awareness campaign contracts. The base for this appropriation is  
294.20 \$..... in the fiscal year 2026 and thereafter. Of the amounts in fiscal year 2026 and thereafter,  
294.21 \$..... is for media campaign contracts.

Thank you for your consideration,

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### References

Sandhyavenu H, Patel HP, Patel RH, et al. Rising trend of acute myocardial infarction among young cannabis users: A 10-year nationwide gender and race stratified analysis. *International Journal of cardiology. Cardiovascular Risk and Prevention*. 2023 Mar;16:200167. DOI: 10.1016/j.ijcrp.2022.200167.

The incidence of AMI (heart attack) among cannabis users consistently increased from 2.36% in 2007 to 6.55% in 2018.

Desai R, Singh S, Patel K, Goyal H, Shah M, Mansuri Z, Patel S, Mahuwala ZK, Goldstein LB, Qureshi AI. Stroke in young cannabis users (18-49 years): National trends in hospitalizations and outcomes. *Int J Stroke*. 2020 Jul;15(5):535-539. doi: 10.1177/1747493019895651.

Conclusions: Rising trends and higher risk (16% higher of overall young-onset stroke, 41% higher of acute ischemic stroke) of stroke-related hospitalizations and worse outcomes among cannabis users aged 18-49 years from 2007 to 2014.

Han et al. Trends in emergency department visits associated with cannabis use among older adults in California, 2005–2019. *J of the Am. Geriatrics Society*. Volume 71, Issue 4, April 2023.

Results: The cannabis-related ED visit rate increased significantly for adults aged  $\geq 65$  and all subgroups ( $p < 0.001$ ). The overall rate increased from 20.7 per 100,000 visits in 2005 to 395.0 per 100,000 ED visits in 2019, a 1804% relative increase.

MDH Trends in Hospital-treated Cannabis Poisoning among Minnesotans. Shelbi Giesel, Epidemiologist. Feb. 8, 2023.