

720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

July 12, 2020

Dear Senator Smith:

I was happy to learn that Senate Bill No. 461 on tobacco cessation services authorization and appropriation was introduced. I urge your support for it.

The bill will have the commissioner of health implement the administration of statewide tobacco cessation services, such as providing telephone-based coaching and counseling, free FDA-approved tobacco cessation medications, referrals, and written materials to Minnesotans who seek advice or services to help them to quit using tobacco products (MN SF461, 2014). Also, the services will be coordinated with the health plan companies.

The appropriation of funds will help ensure that the commissioner of health will well implement the program. It will help increase public awareness that the services are available, which could encourage Minnesotans to start or continue to quit smoking.

I am an R.N. who strongly disapproves of tobacco usage. I suffered vocal cords cyst from second-hand smoke and also lost my father due to the complications of chronic smoking. He tried to stop, but at that time, unhealthy addiction was hard to fight without enough support from the government. If Minnesotans would be aware that support and services are free and available, they will be encouraged to quit smoking and urge their family, friends, or relatives to save them from succumbing to the deadly effects of nicotine.

According to the CDC (n.d.), 5,900 adults die from smoking each year in Minnesota. However, the good news is 7 out of 10 smokers want to quit smoking, and most of them try several times to stop successfully. Therefore, eliminating barriers to quitting, such as free medications and services, are critical ways to help smokers quit.

Your support to stop the ongoing youth vaping crisis demonstrates your drive to stop tobacco usage and your overall passion for improving health and wellness. I urge you to also promote and vote for S.F. No. 461.

Please let me know if there is anything I can assist with. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

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