



Senator Kari Dziedzic
Chair, State and Local Government and Veterans
3113 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

April 5, 2024

Dear Chair Dziedzic,

I am writing as the CEO of Vireo Health of Minnesota, one of Minnesota's medical cannabis licensees. I was personally present on July 1st, 2015 when Vireo served Minnesota's first medical patients, and for the past nine years, it's been an honor to lead our team while serving more than 55,000 Minnesotans with compassionate care.

I am proud of the way we have supported my home state; with our community partners, we have advanced medical research and supported expungement and clemency efforts, and we have a nine-year track record of providing jobs for hundreds of Minnesotans and supporting labor peace under a CBA with the UFCW Local 1189.

We applaud the work that went into crafting last year's adult-use bill, and into laying the initial groundwork for the launch of adult-use sales. HF 100/SF 73 contained many commonsense outcomes – streamlining efforts to expunge non-violent cannabis charges, generous home grow and possession limits, and the creation of the medical combination license which allows up to 90,000 square feet of cultivation capacity.

Achieving a successful roll-out of an adult-use program is a challenging undertaking, and we have seen programs fail when the process begins to pit applicants and stakeholders against each other. Our shared responsibility as stewards of cannabis in Minnesota is to be stronger together. This isn't a zero-sum game or winner takes all; a successful industry depends upon folks both competing and working together to have a robust supply chain, this supports good business, good product safety and brings consumers to the regulated and taxed market.

The demand for cannabis in Minnesota will be large enough to enable success at every level of the supply chain. But a minimally-viable market launch, with a slow or tiered issuance of licenses and an inefficient dual supply chain, will put a successful program implementation at risk. Establishing licensing timelines for all license types now will provide all applicants the visibility needed to ensure success in the market. Consumers want access to quality products at affordable prices, and making sure supply is adequate to meet this demand is crucial to curbing the illicit market, supporting public safety and generating tax revenue.

Unfortunately, last year's bill lacks a clear path to ensuring continuity of access for medical patients. For some patients, medical cannabis is a vital component of managing symptoms and living a fulfilling life. A responsible roll-out in Minnesota must ensure that medical patients can continue accessing the products they rely on.





Existing medical operators like Vireo are already experienced with the unique demands of regulated cannabis markets. Leaning on our experience and operations while also supporting smaller businesses and social equity applicants will help ensure adequate supply to meet consumer demand and prevent the illicit market from thriving. This will allow continuity for medical patients, enable success for small businesses and social equity applications, and protect hundreds of existing Minnesota jobs.

Minnesotans deserve to have choices in their cannabis industry, and a responsible, commonsense roll-out that fully utilizes all available infrastructure can – and should – be part of this program’s implementation.

Sincerely,

Amber Shimpa
CEO, Vireo Health of Minnesota

