



March 21, 2025

Senator Steve A. Cwudzinski, Chair
Education Policy Committee
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3207
95 University Ave. W.
St Paul, MN 55155

Chair Cwudzinski,

I am writing to express my support for SF2234, legislation that would require overdose recognition, prevention and response education for secondary school students in Minnesota.

As a society, we are all too familiar with the tragic outcomes of substance abuse. The impacts of addiction, overdoses and fatalities caused by opioids and other substances are widespread. I believe it's a public health crisis in our communities, around the state and across the country. It is critical that education about substance misuse and overdoses is provided to students in grades 6–12. They are not immune from the impacts of this crisis.

Local data supports the need for this education. In the Minnesota Student Survey in 2022, 86 percent of Dakota County 11th-graders said they believe it's a slight risk for people to use prescription drugs not prescribed to them. Among 8th graders, only 80 percent believed it to be a slight risk.

Opioid use among youth is also a concern. In 2022, there were 20 hospital visits for youth ages 15–19 in Dakota County who had used opioids. Eighteen of those visits were emergencies.

I learned of this legislation through Sofia Templos, a School of Environmental Studies student who is turning the grief of losing her best friend to an opioid accidental death into action. Her desire to help us prevent others from facing such a tragedy is to be commended. Her advocacy in support of this legislation is worthy of our support.

While the Dakota County Board of Commissioners strongly supports overdose awareness and prevention, consider this a message of support from me personally, not on behalf of the County Board.

Thank you for considering this legislation and your efforts to support overdose prevention.

Sincerely,

Mary Hamann-Roland
Dakota County Board of Commissioners

Mary Hamann-Roland

Commissioner – District 7

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